

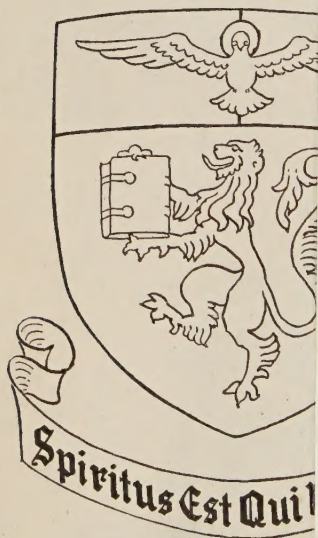
SERVANTS OF GOD

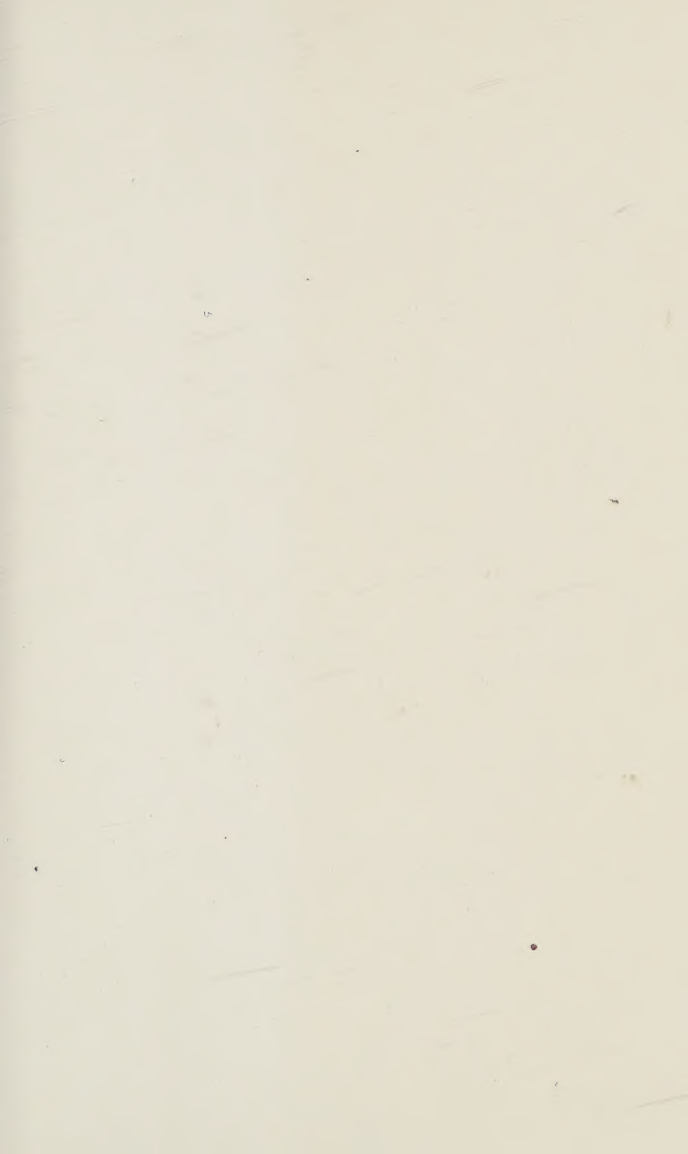


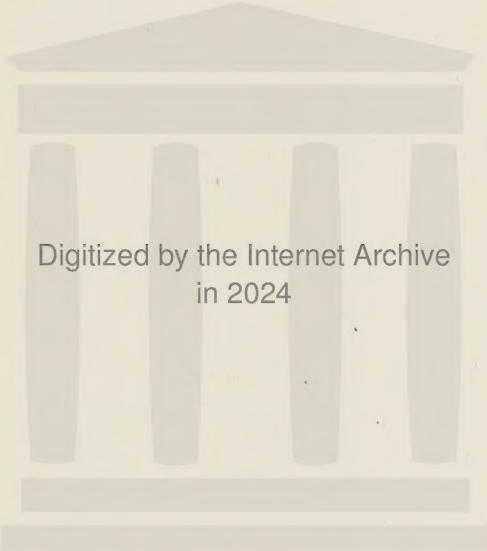
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TRUE SERVANTS OF GOD;

OR,

STORIES OF THE SAINTS.

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Dedicated
TO
MARY IMMACULATE,
QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS, AND
HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

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S. George.



ENGLAND'S patron Saint was not born in that country ; he never trod its soil ; he never brought the faith to our forefathers ; and yet God chose S. George to be especially our advocate in heaven, and to pray that that land may once more regain the crown of faith which has been lost to it so long. His name takes us back to a far-off time — to the reign of the Emperor Diocletian — when he was one of the bravest captains of the army, and afterwards gave up rank and renown to die as a glorious martyr for the Christian faith. These were terrible times for the lovers of Christ, and hard struggles had to be passed through by all who owned His name, but S. George, the

soldier-martyr, was triumphant, strong in the strength which was sent him from Heaven.

When, for the last time, he was summoned before the emperor, many promises of advancement were made if S. George would but deny God. "Sacrifice to our gods," said Diocletian, "and every suffering which you have endured shall be repaid by an honor."

The Saint replied: "Let us go to the temple that I may look upon your gods."

Diocletian rose directly; he rejoiced in the hope of winning back to idolatry one whose services were so valuable in the defence of his country, and the people who crowded in shouted with joy, believing that their gods had won the victory. The temple was silent, every voice in that huge multitude was hushed, every eye was turned upon the brave soldier, who had borne so much suffering and now (as they thought) would renounce the faith he had professed and offer sacrifice to Apollo. S. George approached the statue, and stretching out his hand, said, "Are you God, and

will you receive sacrifice from me?" and as he spoke he made the sacred sign of the cross.

Then the devil, speaking from within the statue, answered: "I am not God; there is but one God; He whom you preach. We fell from heaven and deceive men through hatred of God."

Then cried S. George: "How dare you stay here when I, who worship the true God, am present?"

As he spoke a dreadful wailing seemed to come from every statue in that heathen temple, and, falling to the ground, they were dashed in pieces. The tumult was great then, and the angry people demanded the life of the Saint. "Away with him!" they cried. "Rid us of this magician without delay."

There was one present who had concealed her belief in the true God, but she could do so no longer. This was the Empress Alexandra, who now advanced from the group around her, and kneeling on the ground,

renounced idolatry and boldly declared herself a Christian.

Long and agonizing tortures awaited S. George, but nothing daunted him. "There is none but God," he exclaimed at every fresh suffering, and thus he died, and many another martyr, when they remembered his courage, grew brave and strong, and the history of his victory over error, of his defence of the truth, was handed down from those old dark days to later times, and from it sprang the beautiful parable of "S. George and the Dragon," which is known to most of us; one that has a meaning which will apply to all places and all times.

In the province of Libya was a town where, in a gloomy marsh and forest, dwelt a dragon, so rapid in flight, so strong, that no sword of man could harm it. It was the terror of the country round, and yet whole armies failed even to wound it, and from the town the people were obliged to give themselves up one by one as prey for this terrible dragon,

casting lots to decide whose turn it might be. The king made himself one with his people, and the lot fell upon his own daughter, who was dear to every heart — so dear that the whole city wept as she went forth to die, dressed in her pure white robes, with a lily-crown upon her head.

She stood praying and waiting as the dragon came rushing towards her with awful swiftness. The citizens watched from the walls, sobbing, shuddering, and sickening at the thought of her fate, when suddenly a soldier, clad in bright armor, with spear in hand, came spurring up from the east, and stood between the king's daughter and death. Terrible was the conflict; the dragon tore the soldier with his claws, lashed him with his tail, and yet the brave stranger was unconquered, and then, as the citizens held their breath with wonder, as the maiden prayed, and hoped, and feared by turns, the dragon went down, and the feet of the horse were on him, and the soldier's spear had found the

place to wound, and so the monster lay helpless; and the fair princess rose, and casting her girdle round his neck, led him, subdued and harmless, as her prisoner, to the city gates. Thus runs the old poetical story, which ought to teach us so much. Who is the dragon but the evil spirit? the father of wickedness, of heresy, and unbelief; and S. George, dressed in the invincible armor of our holy Catholic faith, hurls the monster to the ground, tramples on it, shows its weakness, while the Church—the one pure, bright daughter of the King—throws around it the girdle of purity and love, and leads it prisoner and captive to God.

During the Crusades, when thousands of Christian soldiers left all to die for truth and faith, it happened that at the siege of Jerusalem, when it seemed as if they could hold out no longer, an armed captain appeared on the Mount of Olives, waving his sword and encouraging them to proceed. At this sight the courage of the weary men revived, and

crying that it was S. George who had come from heaven to command them, they pressed boldly on against the enemy and entered the Holy City in triumph.

How this may be we cannot tell; it is not clearly known whether a heavenly leader was sent to the help of the Crusaders, but we may be sure that God, in making this Saint our special protector, intended us to be led by his spirit; that spirit of courage and strength which dares all for the cause of truth, and would count it a glorious privilege to give up greatness, honor, life itself, for the sake of Him who shed for us His most precious Blood.





S. Patrick.

THOSE who have written the life of this Saint, have frequently differed as to the place of his birth, but the larger number of accounts say that he was born in a town of Brittany, about the year 372.

The infant was carried for baptism to a priest who was blind, and as there was no water ready, he took Patrick's little hand and made with it the sign of the cross upon the ground, and immediately a spring of water gushed forth. Afterwards the priest bathed his eyes in the miraculous water which had been sent by God for the baptism of the future Saint, and his sight was at once restored.

Several other wonderful things happened while he was still very young. The house where his nurse dwelt was once flooded with water so that even the fire was completely put out by it, and when little Patrick asked for food, he was told that it was impossible to cook any until a fire could be made.

The child went to a part of the house which the flood had not yet reached, and dipping his hand in some water, he let five drops fall from the tips of his fingers, which were instantly changed into five sparks of fire, and it glowed and was not put out by any further rising of the water. Another time it was winter, and S. Patrick had been out playing with some little companions, and when he came in he brought with him an armful of sheets of ice. His nurse said it would have been far better to gather an armful of fagots to kindle a fire, for it happened to be a severe winter, and wood was difficult to get. Patrick replied that it was an easy matter to make fire prevail over water if God chose it

should do so, and then throwing the ice upon the fire, which was dying out for want of wood, he made the sacred sign of the cross, and breathed over it. As he did this the bright flames burst forth, which gave light and warmth all round, and at the same time there seemed to be a radiance upon the young Saint's face, which was plainly seen by those who were present.

S. Patrick had a sister who was sent with him sometimes to look after the sheep, and one day the little girl fell, cutting her head by a blow, which appeared to have killed her; but her brother raised her, and made the sign of the cross upon the wound, which immediately healed up and she felt neither pain nor weakness. The scar from the blow remained always as a proof of the miracle which God had worked by the hand of Patrick. When he was about sixteen years old, the village where the Saint dwelt with his parents was attacked by a band of robbers, who carried away Patrick and sold him to a

chieftain named Milcho, who lived in that part of Ireland now called Antrim.

Here the lad had to tend his master's flocks, suffering many hardships, exposed to the cold of the night, or the heat of the day; but he prayed to God in his troubles, and the divine love burned so brightly in his heart that neither snow or rain, frost or heat, seemed to harm him. For six years he served his master well and patiently, and, doubtless, that part of his life was intended by God to prepare him for his future work among souls in that country, to which he was afterwards to return, but the time for his escape had come, and this was made known to him in a vision, in which he was directed by a heavenly voice to fly from Milcho, and enter a ship which was about to sail.

Patrick obeyed directly, and was guided by God to the place from which he was to escape, and after three days' voyage reached the shore of a part of France far distant from his native place. It was a wild and desert

country then, and as S. Patrick and the sailors journeyed through it, some of them were nearly fainting for want of food ; but at his prayer a herd of swine appeared upon the road, which gave them the means of getting meat to strengthen them before they travelled onward.

After many difficulties, Patrick reached the home of his parents again, and while he stayed quietly there God sent him a vision, in which he heard a number of Irish people calling him to come and dwell among them.

This vision decided Patrick in his wish to become a monk, so he began a course of study, spent some years in Italy, and having been ordained a priest went over to Ireland, where he landed in the county of Wicklow, in the year 432. But the people there had such hostile feelings toward the Saint that he could not stay very long, but set sail, and landed on the island of Holmpatrick, from whence they passed on to the coast of Down.

The holy man now began his mission to

the Irish people, making wearisome journeys about the island, in which he met with much persecution. Once when he was celebrating Mass a man who had dealings with the evil spirit upset the chalice with a long wand which he had got on purpose, but God's vengeance immediately overtook him, and the ground swallowed him up alive. In his travels through lonely parts of the island, Patrick's life was frequently in danger from robbers, and one time he would certainly have been killed but for the devotion of his servant, who had gained the knowledge that some one was seeking to destroy the Saint's life.

So this faithful Odran asked leave to take S. Patrick's usual place in the rough carriage in which he was travelling, and thus when they reached the spot where the robber was concealed the servant was mistaken for the master, and the wicked man thrust a spear through his body, to the great grief of Patrick, who now understood the noble motive

which had caused Odran to make such a request.

Another time he was surrounded by robbers, who, however, only meant to play a trick upon the Saint, and so one of them pretended to be dead, while the rest begged Patrick to stop and say some prayers over his body. God had made the truth known to His servant Patrick, who did not on that account refuse their request, but to the horror of the robbers they found their companion was truly dead, and they surrounded the Saint, begging in earnest now for his prayers. Being filled with compassion for their distress, Patrick came back and prayed so earnestly to Heaven that he obtained the life of the dead man, who was afterwards baptized a Christian.

The success which Patrick met with as he journeyed about the country was great. All through the cold of winter he labored to gain souls for God, and he passed his nights on a stone with a rock for a pillow, with only a wet sackcloth to cover him. Many miracles

were wrought by him, for God gave him power to heal the sick and to restore many dead to life. The Druid priests hated S. Patrick, because of the great work he was doing, and at one of their meetings at Tara, when the native chiefs were present, he went to meet them.

The hill of Tara, in the county of Meath, was the spot where at this time the Druids were going to kindle the sacred fire of Baal, but Patrick had already blessed the Paschal fire upon the plain in sight of the hill, and the flames shone forth so brightly that the Druids saw them. Then they were very much troubled, for they thought it a sign that the Saint would become more powerful than themselves, and they sought the king and told him that unless the fire was put out the man who had kindled it would rule over the kingdom. So the king with his horsemen started to attack Patrick's encampment, but a great terror seized them, and when they were close to the tent they dared not hurt him.

Then the king bade the Saint and his own Druids cast their books into the water to see which would come out unhurt and thus prove itself true, but they refused, and at last a trial by fire was made, out of which one of Patrick's disciples came uninjured, and so he was allowed to go on working amongst the people of Ireland without any hinderance.

The life of this great Saint was full of miracles which we cannot tell in a short story like this; he founded monasteries and persuaded many men and women to serve God in the religious life; he destroyed idols wherever he went; he baptized people in every part of the island, and worked on year after year, counting no hardship too great, no sacrifice too dear, for the souls of those for whom Jesus had shed His precious blood on Calvary.

Every Lent the Saint retired to a lonely cell on a mountain-top in the county of Mayo, and there, by prayer and penance, he offered himself afresh to the service of God, and

sought blessings for the country which was so dear to him. When S. Patrick was seized with his last illness, he lay suffering for seven days. One of his own disciples, who had been made a bishop, came to attend on him, and when he had received the last Sacraments of the Church, he gave his blessing to those who surrounded him, and passed from the world to receive from God the reward of his life-long labor.





S. Edward, King and Confessor.

IT was a sorrowful time for England at that period when the little Prince Edward came into the world; towns were being laid waste by the savage Danes, churches were destroyed, monasteries and convents were pulled down, while holy men and women cried to God for mercy—beseeching Him to deliver their country from such great calamities.

To save his queen and children from the cruelty of the enemy, King Ethelred sent them from England to take refuge in Normandy, and there, in his uncle's house, Prince Edward spent the earliest years of his life. He was not like the other princes of his own age, with whom he had to associate—their

love was for pleasure, while Edward cared only for silence and solitude, for hours of prayer in the quiet churches, or the friendship of pious and holy monks who would talk with him of the love and goodness of God.

The venerable Brithwold, Bishop of Winchester, had gone to Glastonbury for refuge, and during his stay there he beheld one night in a dream the Apostle S. Peter, before whom Edward appeared to be standing listening to his counsels. The bishop, with great humility, begged that this vision might be explained to him, and S. Peter replied that God would answer the prayers of the afflicted people, and that he had chosen Edward as the means of bringing blessings upon England.

When Canute died the kingdom was freed from the oppression of the Danes, and then the English asked Edward to return to his own country, from which he had been so long an exile, and in the year 1043 he was crowned king at Winchester.

There was great rejoicing throughout the nation then — churches and monasteries were restored, and religion flourished once more under the government of the wise and good sovereign whose life was so devout and simple. He was kind to all his people, but if he favored any it was the poor, the orphans, and the sorrowful; and he had a great contempt for wealth. Once it happened that when the king was resting in his own room, his chamberlain brought in a large sum of money, and put it in a chest which he was accustomed to use as a treasury. But he went away, forgetting to close the lid, and one of the king's servants noticed this, and watching an opportunity, went quietly to the chest, and managed to take from it a quantity of money. He did not know that Edward was watching him, so he returned a second time for more; but the third time the king exclaimed. "My good fellow, you are unreasonable. Take what you have already and be gone, for if Hugoline, the chamber-

lain, catches you he will not leave you a penny."

The man flew away greatly terrified, and he had only just escaped when the chamberlain came back, who soon discovered the robbery, and uttered such exclamations of fear and grief that Edward asked what troubled him, saying (when Hugoline told the loss), "Hold thy peace, and be content. Perchance he that took it had greater need than we."

This good king married Edith, the daughter of Godwyn, Earl of Kent, who was a very pious and holy lady, and they agreed to belong entirely to God, spending their lives for His service, and loving each other only in Him.

About this time the Queen Emma, who was Edward's mother, was falsely accused of great crimes, which caused much distress to the king, and he sought the advice of the archbishop, who assembled a council at Winchester to inquire into these terrible reports. In those old times people who were suspected of

great sins were sometimes made to submit to some public trial, which should prove their innocence or guilt; and therefore Emma was sentenced to pass, barefooted, over hot burning irons, and if she could bear this the people would be forced to see that it was by the help of Almighty God, who would only assist her if she had been wrongfully accused.

A day was fixed for this scene to take place in S. Swithen's church, at Winchester, and all the night before poor Queen Emma knelt there, entreating God to come to her help and prove that she had not committed such grievous sins against Him. Next day, in the presence of her son, King Edward, and a great number of people, she was led in between two bishops, dressed in coarse garments of penance and with her eyes raised to heaven, she passed over nine red-hot ploughshares, barefooted, yet she never felt the least pain and did not even know her trial was over and her innocence proved until she looked back and saw the burning irons behind

her. Then she fell on her knees and thanked God for His protection, and Edward cast himself at her feet, asking her to pardon him for having allowed her to endure this public trial, and to prove his regret, he begged to be struck with a rod of iron by her hand and the hands of the bishops who were present.

During the Holy Sacrifice, Edward one day was noticed to smile in a manner which led those who saw him to suppose that something very unusual had happened, and upon being afterwards questioned, he said that God had made known to him that the Danes had been gathering an army together to come and make war upon England, but that as the wicked king was stepping on board the ship which was to bring him, his foot slipped, and falling into the sea, he was immediately drowned.

This sudden death was found to be quite true, and had happened at the moment it was made known to Edward.

This reminded the Saint that he had made

a vow of going on a pilgrimage to Rome, so he summoned his nobles together, telling them of his purpose of thus giving thanks to Almighty God, and bade them determine as to the manner in which the kingdom should be governed during his absence.

The assembly were so much distressed, and begged so earnestly of Edward not to leave them, that he hardly knew what was best to do, so he asked the Pope to decide for him, whether to keep his vow or listen to the entreaties of his people. In reply, the Pope bade Edward give up his desire, which might perhaps bring danger to his people, and he was therefore set free from his vow by the authority of the Church, according to the power given it by God, while a part of the money which had been collected for the journey was to be distributed amongst the poor, and with the remainder an old monastery was to be repaired, or a new one built in honor of S. Peter.

There was a very holy man living in Eng-

land, in a cave under ground, at that time, and to him there was granted a vision of the great apostle, who made known to him that the place upon which the new monastery must be built, was a spot which is now the site of Westminster Abbey. The old man wrote to King Edward and related what he had heard, and the Saint immediately set about rebuilding and restoring the ruined monastery which S. Peter had once consecrated, and which stood on the place he had spoken of to the good old man in his vision.

God was pleased to show His love and favor towards the good king by many public signs. A poor Irishman, who had long been lame, and suffering great agony, crept one day to the king's palace and told the chamberlain that S. Peter had promised to cure him if Edward would carry him upon his back to the church. When the king heard this he ordered the cripple to be brought to him, and taking him upon his shoulders he went on his way. Some of the bystanders

ridiculed the Saint, others besought him to put down a creature so covered with wounds and dirt, but the king persisted in carrying him into the church, where he offered this sacrifice to God, and the man walked away without assistance, being perfectly cured.

On one occasion Jesus appeared upon the altar of S. Peter's church during holy Mass, and gave the good king his benediction. Another time a blind man regained his sight by washing his face in the water with which S. Edward had washed his hands, and afterwards others were miraculously cured by the king's touch and blessing.

The Saint had a particular devotion to S. John the Evangelist, and would never refuse anything asked in S. John's name. A poor pilgrim begged alms from him once in the name of God and S. John, and the king having nothing ready, immediately gave him a very valuable ring off his own finger; some time later, two Englishmen were on a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, and lost

their way, upon which a venerable old man appeared to them and guided them in safety to a town. When they parted, he told the pilgrims that he was S. John the Apostle, and bade them bear to the king this ring, which he had received as alms when he was disguised as a poor man. He bade them also inform Edward that the time of his death drew near, and that in six months he himself would summon him from the world.

The pilgrims faithfully told the king what had happened, giving up the ring, which was afterwards kept as a holy relic by which many miracles were wrought. As it had been predicted, the good King Edward died at the appointed time, after a useful and holy reign, and was buried in the church of S. Peter, now known as Westminster Abbey. Many miracles have been worked at this tomb, and although in the present time the sacred spot has fallen into the hands of heretics, the pious example of S. Edward still lives in the memory of the Catholic Church,

which reverences his virtues, and commemorates the graces and honors bestowed upon him by Almighty God, in the yearly festival which is fixed upon the 13th October, offering to heaven the following prayer :

“O God, who hast crowned the blessed King Edward, Thy confessor, with a diadem of glory, grant that we may honor him in such a manner upon earth as to hereafter reign with him in heaven, through Christ our Lord.” Amen.





S. Margaret of Scotland.

HE life of Margaret, who afterwards became the Queen and Saint of Scotland, takes us back to the days when her grandfather, Edmund Ironsides, was murdered, and his son (her father) sent away to find shelter at the court of the King of Hungary. So, though of English birth, the little Margaret passed her earliest years in exile ; fortunately she was in a country where the king taught by his own example the practice of Christian virtues and a great devotion to the Blessed Mother of God. At about ten years of age, Margaret, with her father and his family, returned to her own country, where all that was good was still

before her in the lives of S. Edward the Confessor and his Queen Edith. But dark days were coming; changes occurred in England, and Edward's death placed the whole land in sorrow; Edgar, the brother of Margaret, was the rightful heir to the crown, but he was no match for the rivals, Harold and William, and when the attempt to put forward his claim had failed, he prepared immediately to return to Hungary with his mother and sister.

But God had other designs for them, and during their short sea-voyage they were assailed by a storm, which drove them from their course and shipwrecked them upon the coast of Scotland.

Malcolm was reigning there, and he hastened to receive the royal fugitives with every mark of welcome and respect, and about a year afterwards he had learned to admire the beauty and piety of Margaret so much that he asked her to be his queen.

The girl's hopes had all been set upon a higher love than his; safely in her heart a

desire had been hidden which grew stronger every hour, and this was, that, like her sister Christina, she might receive the religious habit and become a spouse of Christ. So when Edgar and her mother sought her with congratulations, and exclaimed, "Health to the future Queen of Scotland," Margaret trembled and turned pale, as she murmured out, "I had aspired to be the spouse of Christ."

Then her brother pleaded with her for himself, for his mother; showing her that a refusal to become Malcolm's queen would force them to leave that land and once more wander as exiles to a foreign shore.

Margaret hesitated, and begged a few days' delay, so that she might ask guidance from God; hard as it would be to enter upon a state she had never desired, if *He* called her she was ready to obey.

Long hours she knelt before her crucifix—it spoke to her of sacrifice. "I am not worthy," was the cry of her humble heart, and

as she prayed God gave her light to know that He pointed to the state of marriage and the throne of a queen as the way in which she was to sanctify herself; then at the foot of the cross she laid down all her desires, all her regrets, and rose up strengthened to do the Divine will.

There was joy throughout Scotland when Margaret was proclaimed queen; but the universal homage never disturbed the humility of her heart; her gentle voice and smile bound her people more closely to her, and she was content to offer herself, her tears, her prayers as a sacrifice for them to God.

Margaret's first care was to choose a wise director for the assistance of her soul, and under his eye she arranged her daily exercises of piety and devotion. Each morning saw her at one Mass, if not two or three, and no day passed without her reading in the Holy Gospels. Although her health was weak, she did not find this a reason for dispensations from fasting and other penances; she

also waited upon the poor and sick, and would sell her own jewels if she had not sufficient money to assist them.

The Saint devoted a great many hours to the work of the altar, and as she sat amidst her ladies engaged in rich embroidery, her thoughts were with God and those who suffered for His sake—the poor prisoners without air, or light, or nourishment, whom she longed to restore to liberty.

Malcolm was very proud of his gentle queen, and by her influence he was persuaded to desire peace, and while defending his rights, never to let a desire for vengeance enter his heart, and the rough king often asked her to pray that God would give him those graces which would assist him to be a good ruler over his subjects.

At that time a great many pilgrims resorted to S. Andrews, although they suffered many hardships in going and returning, so the thoughtful queen had houses built upon the shores of the Frith of Forth, where their

wants were provided for at her expense, and ferryboats were in readiness to take them to the shrine of the apostle.

One thing which gave great pain to Margaret was the general neglect of Sundays, and the indifference even towards Easter Communion; the fast of Lent, also, instead of beginning on Ash Wednesday, was delayed until the Sunday after, and all these evils were put right by the queen's gentle influence and bright example. She encouraged the habit of saying grace at meals by beginning the custom of drinking to the health of all those who had given God thanks for His temporal mercies, and for many many years after her death this habit lived, and was called "The grace-drink," or "S. Margaret's blessing."

It pleased God to give the good Scottish queen the care of eight children to bring up in His love and fear, and we may be sure from their earliest babyhood she prayed much for grace to train them aright. Very little

has been told of her life amongst this little family, excepting that she always taught them strict habits of obedience and self-denial, and insisted upon them yielding one to another. The later history of these children shows the happy result of the guidance of this holy mother, for those who died young and those who lived to a more mature age left behind them beloved and honored names for piety and charity.

For nearly twenty-five years Queen Margaret's life brought blessings upon Scotland, and it was perhaps the happiest time she had known amidst the changes which had befallen her, but it was God's purpose that the close of her days should be in sorrow and storm. She had a foreshadowing of approaching death, and would at times speak of it to her confessor, begging him never to forget to offer Masses for her soul, and especially commending her children to his care, desiring him to reprove them if he saw them falling into any faults or neglecting their souls. The

monk gave her his promise and then they parted, never in this world to meet again.

War was now engaging the English and the Scots, and four days before she died Margaret was unusually sad, and spoke to her attendants of some great loss which had overtaken the country. At the time they did not particularly heed her words, but they were struck by them a day or two afterwards, when news came that King Malcolm had been slain.

On the last day of her life the dying queen seemed a little better, and was carried to her oratory to hear Mass and receive holy Communion, but she became worse directly after, and was laid once more in bed.

Every one could see that her end was approaching. The priests who were there commended her soul to Christ and placed the cross in her hands, which she kissed again and again, repeating the Psalm "Miserere."

At this moment her son Edgar came into the room on his arrival from the scene of

war, and the queen, who had not heard of her husband's death, asked immediately for news of him and Edward. The young prince hesitated to answer her, but as she kept bidding him conceal nothing, he told her that both his father and brother had fallen in battle four days before.

The sweet face was perhaps a little paler, but her voice was firm and her eyes tearless as she gave thanks to God for allowing her to suffer, even in her last moments, and besought Him to let it purify her soul from her sin and imperfections, and then, with half-audible prayers upon her lips, she died, at the age of forty-six, upon the 16th of November, 1093, and her body was laid to rest near the altar of the church she had herself founded at Dunfermline.

About thirty years later, the belief that Margaret was a Saint in heaven began to grow in those hearts which revered her name, but it was not until 1251 that Pope Innocent IV. proclaimed her canonized.

Then a grand procession, such as Scotland had never seen, went to her tomb, and opening it, placed her sacred body in a chest of silver enriched with jewels. Still there are memorials of the Sainted Queen of Scotland in places which bear her name. A little apart from the city of Edinburgh is a holy well, called S. Margaret's, and visitors to the castle will find the Chapel of S. Margaret, which many believe to be the oratory where she received that last Communion before she entered her heavenly home, after the days of exile and sorrow on earth were ended.





S. Cuthbert.

THERE is an island off the coast of Northumberland, nearly opposite Berwick, where the holy Saint Cuthbert spent some years of his life—it was then called Lindisfarne, but later it was given the name of Holy Island, by which we know it in the present time. He was born in Northumbria, not far from the monastery of Mailros, somewhere about the year 637, and when he was eight years of age it appears that he was left an orphan.

As a little boy he used to watch sheep on the mountains near Mailros, and there he saw so much of the holy life of the monks that he used, in his childish way, to try and

imitate them, watching and praying even during the night-time.

However, Cuthbert was very fond of play and boyish sports, and often when others were tired out he was still ready to jump, run, or wrestle against anybody, and, indeed, he used to boast that he could surpass all of his own age, and many of those who were bigger and older. The venerable S. Bede, who has written so much of the life of Cuthbert, tells that one day he, with a number of boys, was amusing himself in a field, when a little fellow, not above three years old, ran to him and begged him not to indulge in idle amusement, but to make the best of the powers of mind which God had given him. Cuthbert laughed scornfully, and the child threw himself on the ground crying so bitterly that the rest of the lads gathered round, asking what was the matter; then turning again to Cuthbert, who was trying to comfort him, he said: "O holy Cuthbert, priest and bishop, why do you play among

children when God has appointed you to teach virtue to those who are older than yourself?"

The words of this little boy made a great impression upon the elder lad. They could not have come from the lips of one so young unless inspired by the Holy Ghost; so, caressing the child, and wiping away his tears, Cuthbert went home to think, and from that time a great change passed over him.

When he was older a vision of the holy Bishop Aidan, when he was passing from earth, was given to the Saint, who resolved then to enter a monastery. It happened one night, when he was tending sheep on some distant mountains, his companions were sleeping while he was engaged in prayer; suddenly a long streak of light broke through the darkness of the sky, and in the midst of it a company of angels came down upon the earth, and receiving a spirit of great brightness, passed back swiftly to heaven. Cuthbert marvelled very much at this, and it

roused him to such a desire for eternal life in God's presence that he awoke his companions and told them what he had seen, adding, that he believed it was the soul of some very holy bishop, which had been taken to the happiness of heaven.

When morning came he found that Aidan, the bishop of the church of Lindisfarne, had died at the very moment of his vision, and, giving up the sheep to their owners, he immediately turned all his thoughts to the life of a monk.

Choosing, therefore, to seek an entrance in the abbey of Mailros, because of the great piety of one of the priests there, Cuthbert started on his way and was received by this holy prior, who chanced to be standing at the monastery door when he entered and exclaimed, "Behold a servant of the Lord."

Cuthbert soon gave signs of his future sanctity, fulfilling his duties with great zeal, and observing the most strict rule over himself, and after a few years' training in the

life of a monk he was raised to the office of guest-master at a monastery in Ripon. God granted him a miracle at this time, for the purpose of exciting in his heart a still greater charity towards the strangers whom it was his duty to receive.

One winter morning, when the snow lay thickly on the ground, one of God's angels appeared to him in the form of a grave, elderly man, whom Cuthbert greeted kindly, washing his hands and feet, as the custom was for those who had travelled far. At first he could not prevail upon his guest to eat, but at length he consented, and Cuthbert prepared the table, setting upon it the best food he had to offer. It chanced that he had no bread at hand, so putting on the table some crumbs of blessed bread, he hastened to seek more, but finding that the loaves were still baking in the oven of the monastery, he returned to his guest, and to his surprise found him gone without even a print of footsteps appearing upon the snow. Then Cuthbert felt sure it

was an angel whom he had entertained, and as he removed the table to an inner room he found three hot loaves of a very sweet bread as a proof from God that a heavenly guest had sought the hospitality of the monastery.

Before long the monks were driven away from their home at Ripon, and Cuthbert returned to Mailros, rejoicing to be once more in the company of Boisil. Soon after he was attacked by a disease then raging in Britain, which was thought to be the yellow plague, and his brothers spent a whole night in praying that so holy a life might be spared to them. Cuthbert knew nothing about this, but in the morning they told him what they had asked of God, upon which he exclaimed, "Why then am I lying here? it is not possible that God should have neglected your prayers; give me my stick and shoes."

He got out of bed directly, and tried to walk, leaning on his stick, and his strength came gradually back, so that he was soon restored to health; but the holy Boisil, who

had also been attacked by the disease, did not recover. Before he died he foretold many things which should happen to Cuthbert, amongst others that he should become a bishop.

The office of Prior of Mailros, which had been filled by Boisil, was given after his death to Cuthbert, who, imitating his holy friend, travelled about the country instructing the ignorant and correcting error. He was so skilful in teaching, and had so clear a knowledge of the hearts of men, that no one ventured to hide sins from him, often openly confessing their guilt. During his visits to these villages among the mountains Cuthbert would take the time when all were sleeping for his own prayer and penance, and a monk, who one night secretly followed him, observed the holy prior go down to the sea and walk into it until the water reached his neck, and then begin the praises of God until dawn, when he came out of the water and knelt in prayer again.

During the years he dwelt at Mailros several miracles are known to have been worked by Cuthbert. He had gone with two of his monks by sea to a lonely place on the banks of the River Nith, when a violent storm came on and kept them there from the day succeeding Christmas-day till the Epiphany, exposed both to cold and hunger, but by his prayers food was given to them, and he was able to foretell the coming of a fair wind.

Another time, when the house of a woman who had been his nurse was in danger of being destroyed by fire, he knelt down on the ground before the door and prayed, and a strong wind immediately rose in the west, which turned the flames another way and saved the dwelling.

Cuthbert was next removed to the monastery upon the island of Lindisfarne, where he led a life of prayer and activity similar to his custom during his stay at Mailros, ruling his monks wisely within the walls of their holy house, giving many hours to visiting the

neighboring people, converting many to God by his example and earnest words. Here he stayed twelve years, at the end of which he longed for a more retired life, and obtained permission from his abbot to go to a little island called Farne, which was a solitary rock, removed just a short distance from Lindisfarne. It was a barren spot, without fruit, water, or trees, but by the prayers of Cuthbert corn sprang out of the hard earth, and water was miraculously caused to gush out of the rock.

The hermit set to work to form a cell for himself, the wall of which was formed of rough stones and turf (stones so heavy that angel hands helped Cuthbert to raise them and place them on the wall), and there he began to lead his solitary life, visited at rare intervals by his brethren of Lindisfarne. Many sea-birds came to the island, building their nests by the Saint's cell, and of these, the eider-ducks were his especial favorites, and he taught them while sitting upon their

necks not to fly away when he came near nor to fear his touch.

Many followed him to his solitude to confess their sins, or to tell him their temptations and trials, and never went away unconsoled or unaided. Nine years after he had gone to this island Cuthbert was made bishop, and forced to leave his cell; but after fulfilling the duties of that position for two years he resigned it, and went back to Farne, because he knew his death was approaching, and he wished to prepare especially for it by solitude and prayer. It was Christmas-time when he left Lindisfarne, to the great sorrow of his monks, who stood round mournfully as he entered the boat. "Tell me, reverend bishop, when we may hope for your return," exclaimed one, to whom he answered, "When you bring my body back here."

During the short time he lived in his little rocky retreat a party of the monks went one day to see him, and when he had talked with them and given them his blessing he returned

to his cell, bidding them take some food he had got ready. They refused to touch it, saying they had refreshments with them, but suddenly a storm arose which hindered their return to Lindisfarne, and for seven days they were kept on the little island.

On the seventh day the holy Cuthbert saw the food still untouched, and, reproving them for disobedience, he ordered them at once to cook and eat it. As soon as they began to do so, the wind went down and the storm ceased, and after they had finished their meal they went safely back to their monastery, having learned the consequences of disobeying even the least request of so holy a servant of God.

About two months after his return to Farne Cuthbert was seized with sudden illness, and the abbot and others went to visit him, to whom he explained all that he desired as to his burial, which he wished to be there in Farne, by his oratory.

When the news was taken to the monastery

that the bishop was dying, it caused the greatest distress, especially when they heard that he desired to be buried on his own island, and they sent some of the brethren to entreat that they might possess his body in the church of Lindisfarne, and after some hesitation he consented, in order that they might have the opportunity of visiting his tomb. Up to his last day upon earth the holy bishop prayed constantly, and addressed words of comfort and spiritual help to those who assisted him, and then, after receiving the Sacraments, he gave up his soul into the hands of God, who received him among the blessed in heaven.

The abbot, Herefrid, put up a signal to let the monks of Lindisfarne know that their bishop had expired, and shortly after they conveyed his body to their monastery, and many miracles were worked at the tomb. Towards the close of the eighth century a Danish fleet appeared off the coast, and a troubled time began for the church of Lin-

disfarne; their altars were robbed, many of the monks were slaughtered or drowned in the sea, and those who were spared had to escape with the sacred relics of their bishop, Cuthbert.

They bore the coffin to the sea-shore, and there resolved to await a change of tide, but suddenly the waves rolled back and made a dry path, by which they safely reached the opposite coast. For seven years the remains of Cuthbert were carried about from place to place for safety, and there are few spots in the North of England which were not visited and blessed by them, upon which in later times chapels and churches rose up bearing his name, and then the chief resting-place for the holy relics was found at Durham, and a handsome cathedral was built over them.

In the sixteenth century the body of S. Cuthbert was found still incorrupt, and though its present resting-place is a secret, there is a tradition that when England again

becomes Catholic it will be made known in God's mercy, and given back to the keeping of those who will raise a worthy shrine for the honored relics of the Saint of Northumbria.





S. Philip Neri.

IN reading the life of this great Saint, who has the title of the Apostle of Rome, we feel as if he had come to teach us how to be very holy, yet cheerful and gay ; how to keep us as closely united to God amidst the bustle and work of the great busy world as if we were in the shelter of the quiet cloister.

“Filippo Romolo,” as his baptismal name was registered in the church of S. John Baptist, was born in the city of Florence on the 21st of July, 1515, and his father, Francesco Neri, and his mother, Lucrezia, were persons of good family and great piety, who tried to bring up their four children in the fear

of God and the faithful practice of their religion.

The little Philip was always remarkably obedient, and when his own mother died, and his father in time married a second wife, the child paid this stepmother the same respect as he had shown to his own parent in every trifling thing.

Only once did Philip cause his father to be displeased with him, and that was when he gave his sister Catherine a push for disturbing him and Elizabeth when they were reading the Psalms together, and then he was so sorry, and cried so bitterly for his fault, that he was quickly forgiven. All his little companions loved him because he was so kind to them, so ready to give up to their wishes when they prayed; indeed, it seemed as if nothing could make him angry or impatient, and they called him "Good Pippo," because he was so sweet-tempered.

An accident happened to this little boy when he was about eight years of age, which,

strange to say, did not cause him the least injury. A donkey was standing in the courtyard, and without thinking of any danger, Philip jumped on his back, and together they fell down several steps into a cellar, in such a way that he had the donkey entirely upon him. The servants were terrified, and ran to the spot, expecting that he would be seriously injured, if not dead; but they drew him out quite safely, not even bruised or stunned by the fall, so wonderfully had God preserved him.

When the time for his education began, Philip won the love of his school-fellows by his good humor and gentle gayety, just as he had won the little playmates of his earliest years, and he delighted his masters by his rapid progress and intelligence.

We can be sure that this boy would not have been so kind, so obedient, so industrious if he had not been filled with the love of God. It was his prayerfulness, his constant recollection of the Divine presence,

which kept him good and pure and modest during all the trials and temptations which no youth is wholly free from. Yet with Philip there was no *talking* about his devotion — it was quiet and persevering goodness which tried to pass unobserved, and even his desire and hope to be called by God to serve him as a priest was treasured in his heart as a secret thing, which was better hidden than made known to others.

If anything troubled Philip, he turned to God for help with the simple trust of a little child. Having once lost a gold chain in the street, he found it by immediate prayer, and in the same way regained a parcel of clothes which he had let fall he knew not where.

With all his joyousness and gayety, Philip had a great longing to suffer for Christ, and when he heard of what his Lord had endured for him, tears would run down his cheeks as his heart burned to prove his grateful love by bearing some pain or trial for His sake. So when, at the age of fifteen years, he was very

ill with a violent fever, he never complained, and even went about as usual, until at last it was found out, and he was compelled to keep his bed and take proper remedies.

Philip showed his contempt for what the world thinks great in many ways. A list of his ancestors was once showed him, with the idea of giving him pleasure by the knowledge of the good birth of those to whom he was related, but in indignation he seized and tore it to pieces, saying that he only cared to have his name written in the Lamb's book of life.

As he grew near sixteen years of age his parents began to think much about his future occupation, and, having a very rich cousin at Naples, Francesco Neri sent Philip to him, hoping that he might inherit his property. Nothing could have been less pleasing to the lad, but he applied himself diligently to the new duties of commerce, and became so dear to his relative that the old man resolved to make him his heir. Yet

while Philip engaged in business from obedience to his father, he gave every moment of recreation to prayer.

The town of S. Germano, where he was then living, lies at the foot of a mountain which is rent by three immense chasms, caused by the earthquake which happened when Jesus died. The Benedictine monks had built a little chapel in the largest of these chasms, and there, as soon as his duties were finished, Philip would hasten to pray, and hour after hour he would kneel before a crucifix, meditating upon the sacred Passion of Christ, and begging most earnestly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that he might lead a life which was higher and better. Day after day, night after night, he prayed on thus humbly and patiently, till God showed him what to do, and gave him a strong determination to leave home and friends and all earthly honor and greatness, so as to serve his Creator without any reserve. When he told his intention to his cousin,

the old man was very much distressed, and tried to persuade him to turn from his holy purpose. As he found that the hope of wealth would not influence him, he tried to touch the youth's heart by speaking of the claims of his family, but Philip only thanked him for his kindness, and kept firm in his resolve, then bade farewell to S. Germano and took his way to Rome. It was the year 1533 when Philip Neri entered the holy city, a perfect stranger, without a home and without money, and for the sixty-two years which passed before his death he never left it. A gentleman who met him, and was much struck with his modest and pleasant manners, gave him a small room in his house, and a certain quantity of flour every year, in return for which Philip instructed his two little sons; yet, although he dwelt under their roof, he did not mix with the family, but spent almost as solitary a life as if he had been a hermit. He ate daily a little loaf, which he fetched from a baker's in exchange

for the flour, and though the servants of the household were very kind to him, and wanted to bring him better food, he would not accept it, and going down to the courtyard, sat by the side of a well there, and dined off bread and water, with now and then a few olives. Even this poor diet was taken sparingly; very often he would go without anything for three days, and never took more than one meal in the day. There was no furniture but a small bed in his room, with a rope extending across it, upon which he hung his clothes, and here he was in the habit of praying many hours of the night.

When Philip began to study theology, he soon gained the first place among his fellow-students, and when his masters found out his wonderful talents, united to such deep humility, they gave him the old name he had won as a little boy in Florence, "Philip the Good." Besides study, besides prayer, he engaged in many works of charity, visiting the hospitals, and catechizing the poor who

crowded the porticoes of the Roman churches ; but when night closed in it was his happiest time, for then he would seek some unfrequented church, and there read the Holy Gospels, or Lives of the Saints, or, falling on his knees, become so rapt in thoughts of spiritual things that he would remain hour after hour unconscious how time was passing, begging always to be taught to follow Jesus in poverty, contempt, and suffering. The sight of a crucifix made him weep so much that, when one was before him, he found it almost impossible to attend to the lectures in the schools ; and the lessons God taught him at the foot of the Cross forced him, after three years' study, to sell his books, and devote the money to the poor, giving his life entirely to the pursuit of heavenly things.

Though Philip remained in the same house he was scarcely ever to be found there now ; the quiet churches were his true home in the day, and often he spent the night in one of

them. If the churches were closed, he would kneel before the door, waiting for the moment when it would be opened and he could go into the presence of his Lord.

He also lived in the constant practice of severe penances, scourging himself with chains, sleeping on the bare ground, and keeping strict silence, and yet in all this he longed for some stricter life, some deeper solitude.

At last he remembered the catacombs; there he should be quite alone, so amidst the bones of the martyrs he prayed and wept, and was so carried away by the fervor of his love that often for three days he would stay underground without having tasted food or water. After a time spent in solitude, the same love of God which had sent him there, filled him with a burning desire to save souls, and so to preach Jesus crucified he returned once more to the crowded churches, to the streets, to the shops, to the hospitals—wherever sinners were, there was Philip Neri to be

found. Strongly as he attracted all people by his sweet manner, he seemed to have the greatest power over youths, whom he persuaded first to listen to him, and then to turn to the service of God. Notwithstanding his fervor, Philip had temptations, but he resisted them all in dependence upon the Holy Spirit of God; many times the devil, in human shape, was allowed to appear to him, but prayer kept him safe and unharmed.

Eleven years after the Saint had given up all for God, he was praying with great earnestness for the gift of the Holy Ghost, when suddenly a globe of fire appeared to him, which entered his lips and passed into his breast. It seemed, then, that he could not bear the heat within him, so he lay upon the ground and tore his dress open, and when after a time, the intensity of the heat grew less, he rose, feeling within his soul a strange new joy. But as he placed his hand over his heart, he felt that it was swollen, and during the rest of his life it remained so, although

he was free from pain, and after his death two of his ribs were found to be broken, and raised up so as to form an opening between the ends. He also had a violent palpitation of the heart when he said Mass, gave Holy Communion and absolution, or prayed, and then it would shake the bed on which he lay, or even the altar where he was offering the Holy Sacrifice. Thus Philip's prayer had been heard by his receiving the Holy Ghost in a sensible form, and with the gift his love to God increased so much that he could scarcely contain it within him. To us, who are so cold, so hard, in God's holy presence, it may seem strange to hear S. Philip cry, "My God, I cannot bear so much! Stop, Lord, or I shall die!" After this miraculous gift, Philip made no change in his outward life; still he taught the poor, visited the hospitals, and passed his nights in prayer, and it was not until the year 1551 that he took holy orders, and was ordained a priest. After then, he resided with his confessor and three

other priests, joining together in prayer, and trying to vie with each other in gaining souls. Philip now began his sacred and happy duty of saying Mass, during which the tears rolled down his cheeks, and he became so overcome that he had to stop short until he had power to continue the celebration.

Once during the Mass some nuns saw him raised from the ground, and a little girl also saw this, and told her mother that "the father stood up in the air;" many such favors were shown him, and he obtained countless graces for others, by gaining them the recovery of health, or a complete conversion from sin, or some help in temporal difficulties.

At that time the Holy Sacraments were very much neglected, and S. Philip roused people from this indifference, so that they began to be frequent at Confession and Communion, and as time passed on they came to him in such numbers that he was hours in his confessional, where he once had waited almost in vain.

Though Philip's holy life did good to so many, there were others who took a very great dislike to him, and would have rejoiced to rid Rome of his presence; they laughed at his devotion, they would close the door in his face when he went to prepare for Mass, they would even drive him from one altar to another with violent words of abuse. But the holy man was never disturbed by this treatment; not only was he silent and patient, but he even spoke well of those who persecuted him, and the more their spite increased so did his prayers increase for them. Many of these persons become penitent, and were afterwards his most devoted followers. Philip was now sure that the place for him to fill was in the world, the life of an apostle amongst men; and though there were many longings for solitude, and for the joy of being a martyr for his faith, he took up the work God offered him, and for the last forty years he spent on earth devoted his time and strength to toil amongst the sinful, the

suffering, and those who needed a guide to a more perfect following of Christ.

The little meetings S. Philip had from the first held in his own room, to attract young men to converse about spiritual things, became so thronged that he was obliged to build an oratory over one of the naves of the church, and here were commenced the devotions and exercises which resulted in the foundation, afterwards, of the "Oratory," where, in time, a religious community sprung up, who imitated the humility, and adopted the habits of life, of their much-beloved father. Many years passed before it took its place amongst the congregations and orders of the Church, but some twenty years previous to the death of Philip he saw his great work accomplished, and his foundation supported by the protection of the Pope.

The Saint was growing old, but his life appeared to be continued that he might show forth the power and goodness of God, for strange favors were showered upon him.

At the touch of his hand, pain would disappear, at his prayer life was often granted miraculously, temptations and sins were revealed to him before they had been confessed, and these things were of daily occurrence. Once a boy had died with a sin untold, which he had forgotten; at S. Philip's call, he awoke as if from sleep, made his confession, and then expired once more. Yet amidst all these marvels, the Saint's humility was ever increasing. "Not I, but Christ who liveth in me," was the expression of the gentle face, the loving heart; and to try to excite the derision and contempt of others he would even do things which were in themselves absurd, but which, being done with the intention of glorifying God, were very dear to Him. At last, Philip became so old and feeble that every one wondered how his life was continued, but he still attended the confessional, and was early and punctual in offering his daily Mass. He had the privilege of celebrating in private, because of his great

age, and it often happened that his soul became so wonderfully united to God that two hours would pass between the Agnus Dei and the conclusion, during which the server would leave the Oratory, so that no one might be present but Philip and the Lord he loved so fervently. When it was over, his eyes were full of heavenly light, and his pure soul seemed to shine through his white face. At last the fathers of the Oratory hear that S. Philip is dying; they stand round his bed, when he is suddenly raised in the air, as he exclaims, "Oh, my dearest Mother, art thou come to free me from pain?" then recovering himself, he grew conscious that others were present, and, bursting into tears, wept long. The Blessed Virgin had indeed restored him for a time to his usual health and labors, but in the next year, 1595, he had an attack of fever, from which he never recovered, although his illness was lingering, and on the 25th of May he died, having reached the age of eighty years.

As the fathers knelt round his bed, one of them cried out, " Father, are you going without speaking to us? At least give us your blessing." Then Philip opened his eyes, looked first to heaven, then to his children, and drew his last breath without any struggle, as if he were only falling asleep. Every one believed him to be a saint, yet many years passed before his canonization was solemnized in S. Peter's church, and then the name so loved and honored in Rome became known and loved throughout the Catholic world.

S. Philip valued prayer so highly that he used to say that men who did not pray were like animals without reason ; prayer was life to him, and he sought to make it the life of others, bidding them throw themselves into the arms of God, asking Him to teach them how to speak to Him. Many short words of prayer were constantly on his lips, all breathing his spirit of humility, simplicity, and love ; one of these will give us the mo-

tive of his every action, "My Jesus, what can I do to please Thee?" God's pleasure — not his own; God's work, God's will, God in everything, and self in nothing, made the life of Philip Neri holy, and his death all joy and peace.





S. Louis, King of France.

ALmighty GOD, in His wondrous wisdom, has chosen His saints from every rank of life, some poor and unknown to the world while they are in it, others great and powerful, others young and weak by nature but strong in grace and love ; no two have been exactly alike even in their way of pleasing our Lord, and this is a proof that no matter what our station may be, no matter whether we are rich or poor, wise or ignorant, nothing can stand in the way of our sanctification excepting our own want of generous, self-denying love.

There have been persons whose riches and power seemed to come between them and

God, but in order that we may believe that no wealth or greatness need draw us away from heavenly things, it has been the Divine will that the lives of many royal persons have become known, giving us an example of extraordinary holiness. The character of S. Louis, King of France, shines out brightly in the thirteenth century, in which he lived. He was the son of Louis VIII. and the pious Queen Blanche of Castile, and from this good mother he early learned to love God. Very often she would say to him, "I would rather see you lose your crown, I would rather see you die, than that your soul should be stained by mortal sin," and these words fixed themselves so deeply in his childish heart that he felt the greatest horror of offending God. His love for prayer was great, and thus his life was singularly free from human passions, and he learned to prize spiritual things far above the grandeur of earth.

Many who are placed in high stations lose that simple truthfulness which is so pleasing

to God, but it was not so with Louis; he would rather have borne any suffering than speak a false or deceitful word. Although in those times it was not possible to be taught as much as we have the power of learning now, he applied himself diligently to his studies, especially to Latin, because it helped him to read the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Fathers of the Church, in which he delighted. When Louis was twenty-one years of age, and no longer under the control of his parents, he did not take up a gay and worldly life; his was the piety which comes from a heart all given to God, — not from constraint, — and therefore he continued as thoughtful, as serious, as devout, as he had been from his earliest days. Although he was now at liberty to be his own master, Louis treated his mother with great reverence and obedience, always seeking her advice, and following her counsels with great docility.

About this time the Emperor of Constantinople came to ask help from France in a war

he was carrying on against the Greeks, promising Louis the whole sacred crown of thorns worn by Jesus during His Passion if it was taken from the Venetians, who then possessed it. The thought of gaining so great a treasure — one which had truly rested on the sacred head of the Lord he loved so well — delighted Louis, and he readily helped Baldwin with money and troops, and afterwards received the holy relic at Sens in the presence of a large number of ecclesiastics and nobles. Besides this, a piece of the true Cross was given to him, and the young king built a chapel to receive these relics, which is still to be seen in Paris.

In the month of May, 1249, the king embarked for the Holy Land, to engage in the Crusades, and when the army had reached Damietta, he made an address to the nobles who had followed him, saying, that while he was there he wished to be considered, not as a king, but as one of themselves. He also reminded them that their purpose was to

fight for the cause of God; that if they died it was for love of Him, while if they conquered it was for His glory, not their own. Inspired with courage by his words, the soldiers fought bravely, Damietta was conquered, and King Louis remained there during the summer, giving to all an example of piety.

A few months later the Count of Poitiers arrived with more soldiers, and they then resolved to besiege Cairo, the great capital of Egypt. During their march they were frequently attacked by the Saracens, but the French were always victorious, until at length a disease broke out amongst them, which carried off a number of their men. In this calamity S. Louis was as calm as he had been during their success; he went amongst his troops encouraging them to submit with patience to the will of God, reminding them of the eternal reward of heaven, which would more than make up for all they had to bear on earth.

Next, it pleased God to try this holy king by further suffering, for he took the infection himself, and when resolving to return to Damietta, he had ordered his troops to start there, they were surprised by a party of Saracens who made him a prisoner. Although he was now in captivity, Louis received all the care and respect due to his rank, and, being attended by clever physicians, was soon cured of his illness, but he had to remain in the hands of the Saracens, and bear many annoyances from them. During his imprisonment the king contrived to pursue as far as possible his usual rule of life, omitting neither fast nor penance, and to every inconvenience he submitted with sweetness and humility.

When the ransom for his liberty was being arranged, the Saracens required from him some form of oath which he deemed displeasing to God, so he would not make it, and when his relations and friends entreated him to yield, that he might return more speedily

to them, he said, "God is my witness that I love you dearly, but Jesus and His Cross are far dearer, and I will not offend Him by doing what is proposed to me."

The Saracens were furious at his firmness ; with a drawn sword at his throat they threatened him with death, but he said, "You can but kill my body ; God alone has charge of my soul, and you cannot harm that," so at length they released him, and he returned to France.

Now that he was once more in his own kingdom, the good king visited the different states, leaving everywhere a remembrance of his benevolence and piety ; to all who were poor or suffering he was merciful and gentle, but to the profane and wicked he was most severe, making a law that for oaths and blasphemies the offender should be punished by having the tongue pierced with a hot iron. But in ordering this, he told them that, if by bearing the penalty he could banish all impure and profane speech from his kingdom,

he would endure it with thankfulness and joy.

No great or lasting success had been granted him in the first crusade he had undertaken, but Louis had a longing to repair again to the Holy Land. Accordingly, preparations were made, but when they were proposing to attack Tunis illness once more broke out in the camp; the king's eldest son died, and Louis himself was attacked with it, and felt so sure that he should die that he spent his remaining time in preparing to meet God and arranging for the welfare of the people he was leaving.

His instructions to his son Philip, who was to be the next king, were full of beauty and holiness; he entreated him to make the service of God his chief care, to choose the guidance of holy and wise priests, and be ruled by their counsels, to be charitable to the poor and just to all his subjects, to separate himself from all detractors, to hate evil and spread truth and peace abroad in his kingdom.

When the disease gained ground Louis received the last Sacraments with great devotion, and as the end drew near he caused himself to be laid upon a bed strewn with ashes, where he expired on the 25th of August, 1270, after reigning forty-four years. Many abbeys and monasteries were founded by this good king, who lived and died in the practice of true and simple piety, valuing lightly his earthly greatness, using it as a gift of God for which he must render an account, and setting before him as the only thing his heart desired that heavenly crown which should be his through all eternity.





S. Genevieve.

THE little Geneviève was the child of a poor French shepherd, who lived at a place called Nanterre, not far from Paris. There she was born in the year 422, and there she began at a very early age to take care of her father's sheep.

Her business was to watch the flock from early morning until night, to see that it did not wander too far; she had to be careful lest the little lambs hurt themselves in rocky, unsafe places, and doubtless the child felt sometimes weary of her work; yet she did all these little duties as well as she could, because she loved God so dearly that she wanted Him to be pleased with her, and she

never forgot that He watched every action and every thought.

When Geneviève was seven years old the holy Bishop Germanus was passing through France on his way to England; crowds of people went to receive his blessing, and our little shepherdess, with her parents, were among them.

God gave the good bishop a special light to know that this child was one whom He had chosen from others to belong to Himself and become a great Saint, and, guided by this divine inspiration, Germanus had her called close to him and asked her if she would present herself entirely to Jesus Christ for her whole life. Geneviève's little face beamed with joy as she answered that she would gladly do so, for it was her great desire, and she begged the bishop to bless her and consecrate her to the special service of Almighty God. So Germanus went into the church, and resting his hand upon the child's head, gave her to our Lord, and prayed that He

would fill her heart with grace and love, and then he bade her parents bring her to him on the next day, that he might speak to her again.

Upon that morning the bishop asked Geneviève if she remembered what a great promise she had made to God the day before, and she replied that she did remember, and that she hoped to keep that promise faithfully till she died, if God would help her by His grace to do so.

Germanus then gave the little girl a brass medal, upon which a cross was engraved, and he bade her always wear it to remind her that she was consecrated to the service of Christ, who bore the cross and died upon it for love of her; he also desired her never to put on bracelets, chains, and other ornaments, such as children usually delight in.

Little Geneviève went home quite full of earnest thoughts and desires, and she resolved to pray more than ever, and to give up small pleasures and amusements, even natural and

innocent ones, so that she might begin to practise self-denial as Jesus her Spouse had done.

One day, when Geneviève begged very hard to go into the church for a little while, her mother grew very angry, and, forgetting what was right, struck the child upon her face. Such passion must always be a great offence against God, but He is especially grieved by any injury or unkindness shown to those who are very dear to Him, and He showed His displeasure by turning this woman perfectly blind in punishment for what she had done.

Geneviève ran to a well to fetch some water for her mother to bathe her eyes with, and, in order that it might do her more good, the child made over it the sign of the Cross, and by the power of God the blindness was immediately cured.

Thus passed her holy childhood, and when Geneviève was fifteen years old she had advanced so much in piety and the love of God

that she was allowed by the Archbishop of Paris to receive the religious habit. Then she began to be still more strict in her daily life; the self-denial she had practised at seven years old was increased now, and she took as little food as was possible, and that generally of barley bread, never drinking anything but pure water. This habit she continued until she was more than fifty years of age, when, in obedience to her bishop, she began to take a little milk and some fish. Prayer, which gives life and strength to the soul, seemed also to give life and strength to the body of Geneviève, or else she could not have lived upon so little food; every Saturday night she spent the hours in beseeching God's help to pass Sunday with devotion. Like every other Saint, Geneviève met with contempt and persecution; people spread evil reports of her and attacked her character, but she neither murmured nor excused herself, for to her it was only a part of the Cross of Christ, only one little thorn from the crown

which pierced Him. Germanus once more passed by Paris on his second journey to England, and knowing that people were accusing her of being a hypocrite and an impostor, he took pains to treat her with special kindness and regard, going to visit and converse with her.

When Paris was attacked by an enemy, the inhabitants were terrified, and began to hide themselves and their property in secure places, but Geneviève had too strong a trust in God to be afraid; she assembled the women of the town, beseeching them to fast and pray, and accordingly they joined her in passing whole days in the church, crying to Heaven for help. Then, when the people were suffering and dying from hunger, because no food could be brought into the city, the Saint's compassionate heart was so filled with pity that she went out at the head of a company to seek provisions, and returned with a great deal of corn.

Towards the close of her life the people

began to repent of the unkindness they had shown Geneviève, especially when they saw that God gave her the power of working miracles ; and many flocked to her, seeking her help and her prayers. And yet it was not until she was dead — until her long and holy life of ninety years had passed away — that the citizens of Paris began to understand that a Saint had lived among them whom they had not loved or honored as they ought. Her body was buried in a church which now bears her name, and Geneviève was made the Patron Saint of France, and those who visit the country of her birth, the country where her relics are still preserved, will hear the story of the sweet and simple life of the little shepherd maiden.





S. Winefride.



OME time during the seventh century a child was born of noble parents in Montgomeryshire, who grew up to be a great servant of God. This was S. Beuno, who, after he had received the holy habit of religion, journeyed into another part of Wales, to visit his relations who dwelt there. His sister had married a virtuous and noble husband, who welcomed S. Beuno kindly, and gave him a piece of ground on which to build a church, and here, with their only child, the maiden Winefride, they came daily, to be present at holy Mass. These wise parents advised their young daughter to give heed to the instructions of S. Beuno, but she needed no such bidding, for she

loved to listen to the words which fell from his lips, and often sought him out to beg him to guide her in a life of piety. Winefride's father intended marrying her to some nobleman, bestowing on her a large fortune, but already God began to make her heart so entirely His own that no other love could find place there. After much thought and prayer she sought S. Beuno one day, and told him her desire to belong to Christ alone, and her fear that by so doing she should displease her father; but when the Lord Theorith heard from the saint that God was calling Winefride to give up all earthly love, he gave her full permission to forsake the world, and also resolved to retire as much as he could from the company of men, spending the largest part of his great wealth upon the poor.

Winefride felt as if she could never sufficiently thank God for the favor He had shown her. Prostrate before the altar she watched whole nights in the church, where the hours

seemed as moments for love of her Lord who dwelt there, and she procured a little oratory near to S. Beuno's cell, where she could visit him frequently, and be led forward in spiritual things.

The enemy of our souls is always angry when a heart is thus wholly turned to God and heaven, and so (hoping to do her harm), he put into the mind of Prince Cradocus a wicked love for Winefride.

One Sunday, when her parents had gone to church, leaving Winefride to follow them after finishing some charitable duty, this young man entered the house, pretending to have business with her father. The holy girl did not at first think he wished to do her any injury, so she received him kindly, asking him to pass into another room, where he could remain until Lord Theorith's return. Then the wicked thought of Cradocus turned to words, and he began to speak of his love for Winefride in a way which caused her to tremble with fear; but she sought God in

her heart, and, directed by His Holy Spirit, answered by an apology for the meanness of her dress, and asked him to permit her to retire, to make some change in it more suited for the presence of so noble a visitor.

Once free, Winefride slipped away from the house by another door, running with all her speed towards the church; but Cradocus, becoming suspicious, rushed into the room where she had retired, and pursued her eagerly down the hill. He soon overtook her, and then, in his rage, drew his sword and struck her such a blow that at the first stroke her head was severed from her body and rolled down to the church where the congregation were kneeling. Terrible as the sight of her blood was, the people gazed with still more surprise at a clear rapid spring which gushed out at the very spot upon which her head first fell, but as they caught sight of the wretched Cradocus wiping his stained sword upon the grass above them, they called upon God to revenge the murder.

S. Beuno had been preparing to offer the Holy Sacrifice, but by God's direction he left the altar, and taking the head of the martyred girl in his hands, approached the wretched murderer and besought God to execute His judgment upon him who felt no sorrow for the deed he had committed. Instantly Cradocus dropped down dead, and the earth opening beneath his feet, his body was carried to the devil, whom he had served. Then S. Beuno looked at the heart-broken parents, and he pitied them. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he knelt and entreated God for His own honor and glory to give back their child to them in life and health. Then joining the body of Winefride to the severed head, he covered both with his cloak, and returned to the altar.

The holy Mass went on. Amidst the tears and sighs of the people Jesus was offered up in sacrifice for sin, and then S. Beuno motioned the parents of Winefride to follow him to where they had laid her lifeless body.

Then, with fervent prayer, he raised the cloak, and the maiden rose as if she had only been to sleep, the light of life and holy joy shining on her face. Round her neck there was a white circle no larger than a thread, which remained always in testimony of the wonder God had worked for her.

Holy as her life had been, Winefride grew daily in likeness to her Divine Spouse. She loved nothing but to learn of Him, and at His sacred name her eyes would fill with happy tears of love, and she begged to be solemnly veiled, as the custom of those days was for those who had given themselves forever to the service of God.

At length it was made known to S. Beuno that he should leave the spot where he had labored for God, and that Winefride should collect there other virgins like herself, to guide souls in heavenly things. When he told this to her, the maiden was very sad, and wept bitterly at the thought of parting with him who had taught her all she knew of

God's service, but S. Beuno led her by the hand to the miraculous fountain where she had once been martyred, and spoke to her of what was the Divine purpose. He told her then that those stones which were still stained with the color of her blood, should never lose their crimson tinge; that any one who asked in her name help, in suffering of body or mind, should receive an answer to their petition; and then, leading her back to the church, he bade her found there a convent for the honor of Almighty God, who had showered His favors upon her. Winefride still wept. "Ah, I am now left as a weak, silly sheep amongst wolves, with no one to defend me," she cried, but S. Beuno answered not. Raising his hand, he blessed her once more, and begun his journey.

Her only comfort now was to obey his slightest command, so the sorrowful maiden began to search out some others who should dwell with her in the practice of prayer and good works.

Her government of this community was wonderfully wise—with great firmness, she united a spirit of gentleness and love, and thus her subjects obeyed her willingly, and were led onward by her holy example.

S. Winefride's fame began to be noised about Wales—many flocked from distant parts to receive her instructions; many obtained the cure of their diseases, by bathing in the water of the holy well, returning home filled with ardent desires to be more closely united to God. For seven years the Saint remained in the convent she had founded; then, by the guidance of Heaven, she journeyed to another spot, where she was received into a monastery of holy sisters, and elected abbess in place of one who died at the time of Winefride's coming amongst them. Here she lived a life of marvellous prayer and penance, always teaching those she governed to keep their eyes fixed upon the example of Christ, and after the lapse of years God called her to the reward of her

love and fidelity, and having received the help of the last Sacraments, she passed sweetly and peacefully from earth to heaven on the 3d of November, which day is now kept as her festival.

Many pages might be filled with the account of the miracles worked at S. Winefride's well—the blind, the infirm, the leprous have been healed by the water which first gushed forth at God's command.

Faith in miraculous cures is weak in these our days, yet there are even now constant pilgrimages to the holy well, where health and blessing are still granted through the intercession of the Virgin-Martyr of Wales.

“Almighty and everlasting God, we humbly beseech Thee that blessed S. Winefride may obtain for us such spiritual and temporal benefits as are expedient for Thy holy service, and our eternal salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.



S. Agatha, V. M.



IN the days when the Emperor Decius reigned there dwelt in the city of Catania, in Sicily, a Christian maiden named Agatha. Quintianus had been made king over the island, and when he heard of the great beauty of the maiden he gave orders that she should be brought before him, and he tempted her with flattery and gifts to love him, but without success.

Then Quintianus sent for a wicked woman who dwelt in the city, and gave Agatha into her hands, promising that if she should subdue her, and make her obedient to his will, the reward should be great.

For three-and-thirty days Agatha was kept

in the house of Frondisia, but though they tried flattery and persuasion, unkindness and persecution, she remained firm in her love to Christ. So the woman sought Quintianus at last, and said, "It would be easier to dissolve the rocks, and cause them to flow like water, than to conquer this girl and subdue her will."

The ruler was very angry then, and commanding Agatha to be brought to him, he cried,—

"Who art thou, audacious girl?"

"I am the servant of Jesus Christ," she replied.

Then Quintianus answered, —

"Give up thy faith, or I will have thee tortured."

To which Agatha responded, —

"If thou shouldest throw me among wild beasts, the power of my God can make them gentle as lambs; if thou shouldest tear my flesh with scourges, the Holy Spirit within me would render thy tortures harmless; and

if thou shouldest light a fire to consume me, the angels could quench it with dew from heaven."

Then the tyrant ordered Agatha to be bound, and scourged severely with rods, and further, he commanded two of his slaves to tear asunder her bosom with iron shears; and still she did not murmur, only saying, "Shame to thee that thou shouldest treat me so." They carried her then to a dark dungeon, and in the silence of midnight there came to her a venerable-looking man, bearing in his hand a vase of ointment—it was the holy Apostle S. Peter, and the youth who walked before him was one of the angels, but Agatha knew it not; and such a glorious light filled the prison that the soldiers fled in terror, leaving the door open. One of them cried to S. Agatha, "Arise and escape!" but she refused to fly from the crown of martyrdom.

S. Peter drew near, and said, "I am come to heal thee, my daughter."

Agatha drew her veil more closely over her wound, and replied, —

“If it is the will of my Lord that I should be healed, He will Himself heal me.”

But when the apostle said he had come from Christ to minister to her, Agatha received his help, and with the heavenly ointment he restored her breast and healed the wounds which the stripes had made in her body, and then disappeared, while the maiden knelt and thanked Christ for His mercy.

Soon after Quintianus sent for Agatha to be brought to him, and, seeing her healed, he cried, —

“Who hath restored thee?”

“He whom I believe in, and to whom I have given my love, has sent His apostle to heal my wounds,” was the maiden’s reply.

Then Quintianus ordered a great fire to be kindled, and the Saint was bound hand and foot and flung into it; but that moment so terrible an earthquake shook the city that the people implored him to desist from tor-

menting the Christian virgin lest worse things should befall them.

So, half-scorched and in terrible pain, Agatha was once more taken back to her dungeon, where she prayed so earnestly that she might see the glory of God that her pure soul was released, and ascended to heaven, where she lives in the presence of Jesus, for whom she suffered, rejoicing for evermore.





S. Lucy, V. M.



NOBLE and virtuous girl, whose name was Lucy, dwelt in the city of Syracuse with her widowed mother, who had instructed her carefully in the truths of Christianity; she did not, however, know that the child had early dedicated herself to Christ.

Many a youth in that country admired the beauty of Lucy, and tried to win her love in vain, and one of these would send her letters, in which he said that it was the great beauty and brightness of her eyes which caused his admiration. Lucy thought over the words of her Lord, "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out," and fearing lest her

eyes should be an occasion of sin to this young man, she called for a knife, and unhesitatingly took out her sparkling eyes, sending them upon a dish to her lover, with these words: "Thou hast here what thou didst long for; now I beseech thee leave me in peace." The youth was both astonished and deeply grieved; but the firmness and courage of the holy girl had made so great an impression upon his heart, that he became a Christian, and ever after practised virtue and piety.

But God did not purpose that Lucy should remain without sight, and one day, when she knelt in prayer, her eyes were restored to her, more beautiful than ever.

The mother of this young Saint had long suffered from some illness, and Lucy entreated her to go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of S. Agatha, by whose intercession, and the power of Christ, she would surely be healed; so they journeyed together to Catania, and, while praying there, Lucy had a vision of

the martyred saint, surrounded by a company of angels, who promised her the recovery of her mother, and the special blessing of Heaven upon herself and her native city.

When Lucy regained consciousness, after her vision, she found her mother healed, and then she begged to be released from the promise which had been made for her at fourteen years of age to become the wife of a rich and noble pagan youth of Syracuse.

Her mother was troubled at the request, especially as Lucy asked permission to expend her dowry upon the poor; but she said — "My child, thou shalt have thy will, only wait until my death before thou distributest our possessions, lest I die a beggar."

Lucy smiled, and said, "Oh! my mother, God values little what we give Him when it is no longer useful to ourselves," and at these words the mother replied, "Then do as thou wilt." So the holy maiden sold all they had, and gave money to the poor and suffering, and when the young man to whom she had

been early betrothed saw this he no longer desired to espouse her, but went and denounced her to the governor as a Christian. Lucy was soon summoned before Pascasius, and commanded to deny Christ, and when she refused, he ordered her to be taken to a place where bad people resorted, who would do her harm. But it pleased the Almighty to work a miracle for the deliverance of this young servant, for as the men attempted to drag her away she became perfectly immovable. Ropes were brought and fastened to her legs and arms, oxen were attached to them, but the slight form of Lucy remained still in the same spot, in spite of the strength of animals and men, and when Pascasius saw this he ordered a great fire to be lighted round her so that she might be burned to death. However, Lucy prayed in the midst of the flames, and they did not even singe a hair of her head, so the governor commanded one of his servants to pierce her throat with the point of his sword, and thus she passed

to the reward of her martyr's crown, and to rest in the love of her Divine Spouse, for whom she had given up her innocent life.

The body of S. Lucy was buried by Christians upon the very spot where she suffered and died, and soon afterwards a church, bearing her name, was erected there, to the praise of Almighty God, whose grace had enabled her to triumph over every temptation and trial, and remain "faithful unto death."





S. Barbara.



URING the reign of the Emperor Maximin, there dwelt in Nicomedia a young maiden named Barbara, whose father, like most of the inhabitants of that town, was an idolater. God's truth had forced its way through the darkness of many souls, and men feared it as now, in later days, they fear the one true faith, which throws its strong, clear light on sin, and discovers its hideousness. And the father of Barbara, in his dread of Christianity, enclosed his daughter in a tower, with only her mother and their servants for companions, believing that thus he should shut out the danger which

he thought so great; but the power of the Almighty can conquer all obstacles, and thus He caused a priest named Vallus to stay for a time near the dwelling of Barbara, who instructed her in the Christian religion and gave her the Sacrament of Baptism.

Before very long, the idolatrous father learned that his child was a Christian. Entering her room one day, he noticed that a window had been lately placed between the two which had always been there, and he inquired why this was done, and whether there had not been sufficient light in the room. "I have had the window made for a good reason," said Barbara. "It is to remind me that there are three lights which illumine heaven — the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the three persons of our great and glorious God."

At these words the father was violently enraged, and would have killed his daughter had she not escaped — not through fear of dying for Christ, but that she might save her

parent from committing so great a crime. Flying to an adjoining mountain, she hid herself there, sometimes in the wet and dreary caverns, sometimes in an abandoned mine; but her cruel father at last discovered her retreat and took her back to Nicomedia.

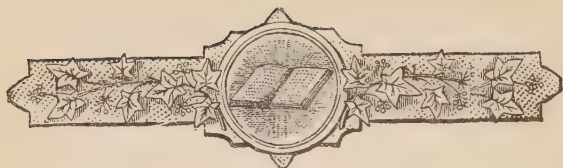
She was summoned before the governor, who ordered her to be tortured, so that in her pain she should give up Christianity, but after inflicting many terrible sufferings upon her, through which she remained firm in her faith and holy love, he condemned her to have her head cut off. The wicked father's heart was so full of enmity against the Christian religion that he had lost all natural affection for his daughter—he hated her then with a fierce, cruel hatred, and seizing her with his own hands, dragged her back to the mountain and executed the sentence of death which had been passed; her head lay at his feet, separated from her body by his own violence, yet even then he felt neither shame nor sorrow. God's vengeance was

soon to overtake the murderer, for as he descended the mountain a thunderbolt fell and killed him on the spot, and no trace of his body was ever discovered. Some short time after, Maximin met with a similar death, as a punishment from Heaven, for his cruelty to the young Christian maiden.

When Barbara knew that her last moment had come, when for an instant she could pray to Him in whose strength she had borne torture, and was ready to meet death, her petition was for others. She begged of God that those who loved her name and remembered her martyrdom might obtain pardon for their sins, and the grace of receiving the Holy Communion before their souls should pass into His presence, and a heavenly voice replied, "My daughter—your prayer is heard." It is for this reason that this holy virgin and martyr is specially invoked by all who keep before them the thought of death, so that S. Barbara's prayers to Almighty God may secure to them the help of the last Sac-

raments, in spite of any danger or difficulty with which they may be surrounded. "From thunder and tempest, from sudden and unprepared death, deliver us, O Lord — S. Barbara, pray for us."





S. Cyril.

THIS boy-saint and martyr had early received the grace of the Christian faith, although his father was still one of the idolaters of Cappadocia. Cyril would not adore these false gods, and his refusal made his father so angry that, after treating him with great cruelty, he turned him out of doors.

The governor of that part heard what had happened, and issued an order for Cyril to be brought before him. He had been told that the child was constantly uttering the holy name of Jesus, and that his father's anger had been powerless to silence him; so now, trying to win Cyril by caressing him most

affectionately, the governor assured him he ought to hate that name instead of loving it, and promised him that if he was obedient he should be reconciled to his father, and regain all that was his inheritance.

Many people older than Cyril would perhaps have been tempted to hesitate : the cruel acts of persecution in those days were so well-known that Christians had reason to understand what would befall them in refusing obedience to the governors of those heathen cities ; but this brave boy did not tremble, he answered boldly that he would willingly suffer for Christ — willingly give up the riches of the world for those of heaven. We may be sure that Cyril could not have felt and answered thus by his own strength — it was God who spoke by him, and gave him heavenly strength to meet the danger which was near. The judge still thought he should conquer, and, as kindness had failed, he was going to try what fear would do, so he ordered the boy to be bound and carried

away, as if he was about to be executed, but he privately said that he was only to be frightened. So Cyril was dragged before a blazing fire, into which they threatened to throw him; but he did not shrink from suffering, and declared as bravely as before that he was ready to die for Jesus, whose name he loved so much; and then they took him back to the governor, saying they could do nothing with Cyril.

The judge said to him, "My boy, you have seen both fire and sword. If you are wise you will escape them, and return to your house and fortune."

That was his last chance of escape, but Cyril was not afraid. "I fear neither the sword nor the fire," he answered. "God will receive me: put me quickly to death, that I may go to Him."

Those who stood by felt sorry for this child, and admired his faith and courage so much that they could not help shedding tears; but he bid them rejoice, because of

the heavenly treasures he was going to possess, and then he died by the sword — still courageous, still speaking the holy name with his last breath ; and thus his pure soul passed from earth to join the “ noble army of martyrs in heaven.”





S. Zita.

IN a little mountain cottage not far from the city of Lucca, in Tuscany, the holy servant Zita spent her earliest childhood. Her parents were very poor, and she endured a good many hardships, but she was always happy and patient because her delight was in God, and no poverty or trouble can separate us from Him. When she was twelve years old Zita had to go out to service, and her father obtained her a place in the palace of a noble family in Lucca, named Fatinelli, where she remained for the rest of her life. No doubt it was hard for the little girl to learn the duties of a servant, and she felt sad at being separated from her

parents and her cottage home, but she set to work to do what was pleasing to God, and prayed more than ever for His help and care. From her babyhood; Zita's heart had been full of pity for every one in sorrow or want, and it had caused her great pain to have no means of helping others because of the poverty in her own home, but now that she began to earn money, she only spent just what kept her decently in clothes, and all the rest went to those who were worse off than herself. Every day she gave her own food to beggars, eating any scraps that she could get from what was left in the kitchen, and it seemed as if it was impossible for her to refuse any one who asked alms for the love of God. One day a poor pilgrim came to the door begging for food and water. Zita had nothing to give, but suddenly a thought entered her mind, and she bid him wait while she took a large copper vessel to the fountain to get him water. As she returned, she made over it the sign of the Cross, and asked

the poor wanderer to drink, and he declared it was no longer water, but the sweetest wine he had ever tasted. This fountain is shown at Lucca now by the name of "S. Zita's well."

The palace of the Fatinelli was close to the church of S. Fridian, and Zita rose early each morning so that she might be present at holy Mass without neglecting any of her duties, and there she might be seen wrapt in prayer until the moment it was proper for her to return to her daily work. This pious young servant was so anxious to do every common action for God, that she kept her mind turned to Him in all she did from morning until night, making her work a continual prayer, and as she had taken the Blessed Virgin as a model of perfection, she loved to form pictures in her mind of Mary in the cottage of Nazareth, busy in household duties like herself, and yet always united to Jesus Christ by love. If it was sometimes hard to obey her employers, Zita remembered how Mary submitted to S. Joseph — if it happened that

her fellow-servants treated her with ridicule or unkindness, Zita remembered Jesus bearing contempt in silence, and thus she became more and more like the holy ones of whom she thought so constantly, and every day the grace in her soul grew stronger.

The remembrance of the Passion of Christ gave Zita a great thirst for suffering, and besides mortifying her passions and inclinations she was led by God to impose many penances upon herself. Frequently she fasted, more frequently she slept upon the brick floor or a hard board, and she wore a rough cord round her waist which chafed her skin. All this was good, but it would have been worthless to our Lord if Zita had forgotten her duty to her master in love to the poor, and love of prayer and penance; but those who watched her life have said that she was always diligent and desirous to please, and ready at any time to assist her fellow-servants, never making a difficulty about what she was asked to do, but keeping that spirit

of gentle meekness which she had learned from Jesus and Mary.

In her master's palace there was one solitary place which no one used, where Zita loved to spend whole nights in prayer, and how near God came to her in these hours we may hardly venture to imagine, but occasionally one of the family passing the door saw brightness like the sunshine coming from it, which they felt sure could only proceed from the divine light of a heavenly presenee.

This holy servant of God also visited the church late at night, when her day's work was done, and there in a retired corner she would kneel and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

About ten miles from Lucca there stood a church which people feared to visit, because of the war then raging, as it was a solitary place where there had occurred several robberies and murders. Here Zita went one night to visit her Lord, but when she reached the place the church doors were closed and

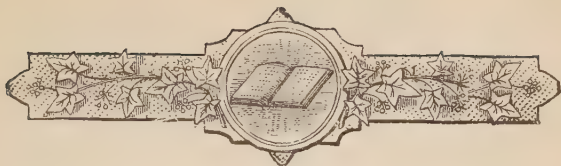
barred. Then she prostrated herself outside and began to pray, but her long walk had wearied her, and she fell asleep until day dawned; when awaking she found the candle she had brought was lighted and burning and the doors of the church opened.

At sunrise the parish priest and some other persons saw Zita praying inside the church, but knowing that the doors had not been unlocked they declared it to be a miracle.

In these nightly visits to church Zita once remained such a length of time in prayer that daylight began to enter the windows of the church. Suddenly she remembered that she had to bake bread that morning, and it was then too late to begin. She hurried home directly and went to the flour-chest, but there she saw a number of loaves all kneaded ready for the oven. While they were baking, Zita went to her mistress to thank her for having this work done for her, but no one in the house knew anything of it, and it was evident that the loaves had been kneaded by no human hand.

Zita's desire was to avoid praise and esteem, and for this purpose she often spoke of her own faults very frankly, and tried to excuse the failings of others, yet when any of her companions did wrong she told them gently of their sin, and tried to influence them to amend their lives.

Until the age of sixty the Saint passed her days in this holy, simple life, and then she was seized with low fever which lasted some time before she could be persuaded to rest in her bed. At last she was obliged to lie down in weakness for a few days, during which she prepared for death by receiving the last Sacraments, and then her soul passed away to heaven, mourned for by the family she had served so long, and by all the poor of Lucca, who had reason to bless the name of Zita. As she expired a star was seen to hover over the city, and many miracles occurred at the tomb of the holy servant, who had risen from obscurity and poverty to shine as a saint in the kingdom of heaven.



S. Monica.

THE early church had suffered terrible persecution and humiliation for several centuries at the time when S. Monica was born, in the year 332, and although there was a period of peace just then, her parents knew its uncertainty so well that they took unusual care to train their little daughter to place her hope in the life which should be eternal, and to despise all earthly joy, which would only disappoint her.

Besides having a good father and mother, S. Monica speaks of the care and pious training of her nurse, who watched over her very strictly, and thus preserved from evil influence or example, the child showed early a great love for God. When she was still

quite a little thing, Monica would run away to the church, when no one was looking, and would be found kneeling in some quiet corner with folded hands and downcast eyes, perfectly happy in the presence of Jesus. At times, in the midst of her games, she would leave her young playmates to get a few moments' prayer under the shadow of some tree, and soon she would forget everything in the love of God, and stay wrapt in devotion until they sought and roused her. Very often she would rise in the night, and, kneeling on the ground, say the prayers her mother had taught her; and thus God, from her infancy, led her to love that union with Himself, which grew wonderfully strong in later years, and which gave her strength to do great things for Him.

Monica had an intense love for the poor, frequently concealing a part of her own meals that she might relieve some beggar at the door; she took a special interest, too, in the sick and wandering, and would direct

them to her father's house, and then wash their feet with her little hands, honoring Jesus Christ in these His suffering servants.

Her nurse accustomed the child to mortify herself in many ways, never allowing her to drink even a drop of water excepting at the hour for her regular meals, no matter how great might be her thirst ; thus she hoped to accustom Monica to practise self-denial, which should increase with her growth, and fit her to follow Christ in the way of the Cross. Although there was so much holiness and sweetness in this little girl's early life, she was not free from faults, and one of these she often spoke of afterwards with great sorrow. It was the custom to allow girls, as they grew older, to see a little to the management of the house, and so, when Monica was of a suitable age, she was given the task of going every day to the cellar for wine, to be used by the household. It happened that, in thoughtlessness and for amusement, she began to put her lips to the wine,

just to taste it — more from the childish pleasure of doing forbidden things than because she liked its flavor; however, from taking merely a sip, she went on to take more, until she would drink a small cupful every time she went to the cellar. A servant was always with her, who of course saw what she did, but who did not inform her nurse or parents of this fault; however, one day when Monica had annoyed her, this woman in her anger taunted and reproached her with secretly drinking wine in the cellar. The young girl's face flushed with shame, and her heart was filled with compunction, and she set to work to correct herself, never again tasting anything but pure water.

This fault was, perhaps, by God's grace, the beginning of that love of mortification which was hers through life, and it taught her to be very humble and distrustful of herself, and thus led her to depend upon a higher strength whenever temptation came in her way.

Like many of the other towns of Africa, Monica's birthplace was full of the spirit of heresy and schism, and, when she was about eighteen years old, such public crimes and disturbances existed that the emperor interfered, and forbade any one to profess openly this heresy. Then the town, like many others, returned to the Catholic faith, and the Saint must have rejoiced in seeing her birthplace set free from error, especially as it is thought her baptism and First Communion took place at that time. When Monica was a little older her parents gave her in marriage to a husband who did not love or serve God, and a most unhappy life began, for she had to dwell in the house of her mother-in-law, who was a woman of a violent and jealous disposition. The trials which S. Monica endured were very great — even the servants spoke untruthfully about her, and took evil reports of her actions to her husband and his mother; but God gave her the love of suffering, which helped her to bear

everything with courage, and seek her only joy in prayer. In the year 354 her first child was born, who received the name of Augustine, and regarding whom God gave her a secret assurance of the holiness of his future life if she taught him from his infancy to be faithful to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless it was this which inspired S. Monica with such faith during the years when that son wandered from God, and she prayed so earnestly and so trustingly for his conversion.

Two other children were given to S. Monica, and although their father was a pagan, and their relatives and servants set them no good example, the prayers of the holy mother obtained for them the grace of becoming faithful servants of God.

From the earliest infancy of Augustine S. Monica endeavored to fill his little heart with the thought of God's goodness and holiness. It was not then the custom to baptize children directly, but she took the first

opportunity of putting his name upon the list of catechumens, which means those who were being prepared to receive the grace of baptism. Knowing that her child would presently be tempted to follow the example of his father, and that even her care could not shield him from evil influence as he grew up, Monica tried to form his conscience so that he might early learn to distinguish right from wrong; and she especially loved to talk to him of the joy of heaven, bidding him raise his eyes to the sky, as she tried to picture to him the peace and rest which they enjoyed who were dwelling forever in the presence of God. To this she added lessons about the crib in which the great God humbled Himself to become a little child — of the Cross on which He died a death of shame and suffering, that we might be freed from the eternal punishment our sins deserved. During the time of S. Augustine's childhood he was seized with such violent pain and illness that his life was supposed to

be in danger, and in his fear he thought of God and of eternity, and begged earnestly to receive the grace of baptism. His mother longed for it as ardently as he, and entreated that he might not die without the sacrament being given him; and immediately the pain and danger lessened, and the child grew well, so that his baptism was not thought of any more until many years after. As Augustine grew older, S. Monica knew that she must allow him to leave her, to begin his education; so she placed him in a town not many miles distant, trusting that by God's grace he might not forget all the lessons of virtue and piety which she had tried to teach him. But although the lad advanced rapidly in his studies he began by degrees to fall into sinful habits, and yet his conscience was not dead—he often thought of his mother's early training, and his heart was full of remorse, but yet he would not turn to God, and begin a better life, for he persuaded himself that he could do that at some later time.

Although God permitted this great sorrow to fall upon S. Monica, He gave her the joy of seeing her husband give up his unbelief, and put himself under Christian instruction, just at the time she had been married to him seventeen years, during which she had prayed for his conversion, and not long afterwards he died a calm and pious death, after having been baptized in the faith of Christ's Church. Then S. Monica vowed to belong only to God, and never to have another husband, and she received the dress which in those times the Church gave to widows who intended to pass the rest of their lives in retirement from the world. The love of the poor had been very strongly rooted in her heart as a little child, and now that she was free she devoted herself more and more to waiting upon them, and nursing those who were sick in the hospital. Besides this, S. Monica sought out little homeless orphan children, whom she tried to train for God as she had trained Augustine. Wherever there was

sorrow or suffering the Saint, who had endured so many sorrows herself, was ever ready to give comfort and help.

The rest of her time was given entirely to God, and He rewarded her with a great deal of His love and consolation. Augustine's sinful life was not unknown to his holy mother, and she mourned continually over his state ; but her trust in the Almighty was so strong that she prayed more and more for his conversion, believing that he would one day return to God, whom he had so much offended.

For years she offered up her tears, her sufferings, her supplications to the Almighty, and then the answer came, and Augustine renounced the unbelief and sin into which he had fallen, and gave his heart and life entirely to God. S. Monica was happy then ; her son was baptized, he was only desirous of devoting the rest of his days to the service of his heavenly Father ; and when he desired to live in some retired spot, where the world's temp-

tations should not assail him, she was ready to accompany him anywhere. When Augustine had been following a course of sin he had fled from Africa to Italy; there his mother had gone also, and there he had been converted by her prayers; but when he proposed to return to Africa she at once prepared for the journey.

They started upon the route, and, as they rested at different stages on the way, the mother and son would talk of heaven as they had done long years before, when he was a little innocent child; but Augustine noticed that she seemed to have a more intense longing to be set free from this world, and it seemed to him that her pure soul could not long bear to be separated from that peace and joy which had ever been her one hope, her first thought.

Only a few days later S. Monica was attacked by fever, and God made known to her that her end was near, and that she would never return to Africa. For more than a

week she suffered greatly ; but many heavenly favors were granted her, although one immense sacrifice was required of her. She longed to see the Holy Eucharist, but the sickness, which continued violent, made it impossible for this desire to be granted, and all the help they could give her was to place a cross in her hand, upon which she gazed lovingly until her eyes closed in death.

It is said that, just at the last, a lovely little child was seen to enter the room, who approached the bedside of the Saint, and pressed a kiss upon her heart : it was Jesus, the Holy Child, who called her thus to come with Him to the home He had prepared for her in heaven, and at the touch of His sacred lips she bowed her head and died without a murmur or a sigh — in perfect peace.



S. Germaine Cousin.

IN a little French village, not many miles from Toulouse, there dwelt a poor couple named Laurence and Mary Cousin, who, like the rest of their neighbors, had to toil hard for their daily bread. They had a child whom they baptized in the name of Germaine; but while she was still very young her mother died, and with her father's second marriage all her sorrows began. The little girl had been from her birth ailing and weakly, and was deprived of the use of her right hand and arm, and on this account her stepmother took a violent dislike to the poor child, treating her with much harshness, and by pretending that her

bad health made her dangerous as a companion for the rest of their family, she at last persuaded Laurence to send her out of the house, and compel her to live as a little shepherdess by day, sleeping by night under a staircase in the stable.

The motherless child must have left her home with a heavy heart — in scorching sunshine or through frost and snow and rain she must tend the sheep; her food was only of black bread, nor had she as much of that as she could have eaten, and then when night came, instead of being welcomed home, she might only creep silently to her lonely bed on a heap of vine-twigs. But though Germaine was only a little girl, God gave her the grace to understand that this unkind treatment could only happen by His permission, and that however hard it seemed, it was really the means He had chosen to make her love Jesus very much, and so whenever she felt sad she turned her thoughts to the sufferings of the Saviour, and grew patient as she remembered

that he had chosen her — a poor, weak child — to bear contempt and hatred for His dear sake.

Putting before her the example of Christ, Germaine never gave angry answers to the reproaches of her parents — even when the neighbors called her a hypocrite, and said she was trying to be thought a saint, no angry flush rose to her pale cheek — she only offered all the pain to Jesus, and in return He gave her peace in her heart which no one could take away.

There was a small chapel on the moor where Mass was offered daily, and here little Germaine knelt whenever it was possible, and each great Festival and Sunday saw her receiving the Body and Blood of Christ with faith and love. At those times she was no longer sorrowful — all the unkindness of her stepmother, all the taunts of the villagers, were forgotten, and the little shepherdess was happy in the possession of Jesus, who was everything to her. She did not go away and

forget her Lord as so many of us do — as she watched her sheep or busied herself in spinning, she thought of Him still, and very often she would kneel down before a rough cross which she had set up under a tree, and think of His sacred Passion. The motherless child was sure that Mary was always watching over her, and so she poured out all her griefs to that sweet heavenly Mother, whose love comforted her in her lonely life. Germaine knew what hunger was, but yet she sometimes found one poorer than herself with whom she would share her small allowance of coarse black bread, and she often got the other young shepherdesses to listen as she told them about Jesus. God showed His love for this girl in many unusual ways. When she wanted to go to Mass, and there was no one to take charge of her sheep, she would plant her distaff in the ground, believing that her Father in heaven would not let them pass beyond it, and her simple faith was never unrewarded. One time when her stepmother

heard that Germaine had been assisting her poorer friends with some food, she followed her to the moor in violent anger, and there she found the child distributing scraps of bread to her hungry companions.

The woman rushed forward, but suddenly Germaine's lap was filled with the sweetest roses, instead of dry morsels of bread, and those who were present stood astonished and ashamed of their passion as they saw how God had Himself defended His humble little servant. The story passed from one to another—many began to be grieved at the way they had treated Germaine, and her father asked her to come back to her home, but the young shepherdess had found Jesus so close to her in her sorrows and sufferings that she could not give them up, but asked to be allowed still to keep to her solitary lodging in the stable on her bed of vine-twigs.

Sixteen years had passed since Germaine's troubles began—years in which she had grown in virtue and the love of God, and

now she was ready for heaven. One summer's night she lay down on her poor bed as usual, but when morning came her sheep were not led out upon the mountain side, and when some one noticed this and went to awaken Germaine they found her body lying as it were in a calm sleep, but her soul was with God and the angels. During the night two religious had been sheltering in a ruined castle close by, and these saw two angels clothed in white, pass along the road and enter the cottage of Laurence Cousin; the watchers were still gazing in surprise, when the angels came forth, but another was with them crowned with heavenly flowers. It was Germaine, the poor shepherdess, who had exchanged the sorrows of earth for the eternal bliss of heaven.

Many people came to see the burial of the shepherdess of Pibrac, but nothing unusual occurred—she was laid in a common grave without even an inscription upon it, and thus her simple, holy life of twenty-two years

seemed to pass away from the memory of man. Forty-three times summer and winter passed over the little village, no one spoke of Germaine, few knew anything of her, but God's will was now to bring her sanctity to light. When the sexton was digging a grave for one of her relations he came upon a body still fresh and incorrupt — a little taper in one hand, the flowers on her breast scarce faded — her features bearing the mark of pain and disease, and her right arm withered. No one could recognize it at first — those forty-three years had brought many a change amongst the inhabitants of that French village, and few were left of those who had once known Germaine Cousin, but one of the elder people came to look, and recognized the young shepherdess, and then others began to tell what they could about her, and the devotion to her memory became so strong that her coffin was left uncovered. After a while a lady of high rank objected to have this dead body near her place in church, and requested

that it might be removed, but soon afterwards she was seized with severe illness, and her infant child took the complaint from her and lay at the point of death. The lady's husband suddenly remembered what she had said about the body of Germaine, and he felt so sure that by her disgust she had offended God that he entreated her to ask His pardon. She did so, and as she knelt in prayer the room was filled with light, and Germaine appeared, promising health for herself and for her child. Next day this lady went publicly to church to atone for her conduct and to thank God and S. Germaine, and the holy body was then enclosed in a leaden coffin and placed in the sacristy. This was but the beginning of miracles, and as years went by, and still the wonders worked at her tomb continued and increased, the whole history of her pure life was made known, and when years had passed Germaine was pronounced one of the "Blessed." The still higher dignity of being a canonized saint is hers now,

thus showing us that poverty, lowliness, and suffering, instead of being hinderances, as some may think, are really helps to bring us very near to God on earth and fit us for the enjoyment of His presence in heaven.





S. John Nepomucene.



ANY hundred years ago a little boy might have been seen running every morning to serve Mass at the Cistercian abbey of a small market town in Bohemia, who was known to the neighborhood by the name of John, and is familiar to us now as S. John Nepomucene, one of the saints and martyrs who are so dear to God.

As he grew older his parents allowed this lad to study for the Church, and after he had been some time at the University of Prague, he filled several offices in that city, until, in 1390, he was made a canon of the cathedral church.

Wenceslaus, who was then king, was a very bad man, and he began to think evil of his wife Sophia, and suspect her of all kind of sins.

Now Sophia was a very pious queen, and she had chosen for her confessor "Master John," as he was called, because she knew he was very holy and would be able to show her how best to serve God, and at last Wenceslaus was so wicked as to go to him and ask him to tell what the queen had said to him in confession.

Every Catholic knows that, although during the eighteen hundred years since Christ instituted the holy sacraments there have always been people making and priests hearing confessions, there never was a priest who broke the law of the Church which forbids him revealing what is said to him when he is in the place of Christ to forgive sins.

There have been a few — a *very* few — priests who have not been good men, just as among the disciples there was one bad, like

Judas ; yet those who have committed other sins, who have even been so false as to renounce their holy faith, have never dared incur God's anger by breaking what is called " the seal " of confession.

So John Nepomucene, who was very holy, paid no heed to the wicked requests of Wenceslaus, and although he was threatened with punishment, it never made the least thought of yielding come into his mind, and when he had been imprisoned with the hope of frightening him into obedience to the king he persisted in his refusal as strongly as before.

Wenceslaus was so angry that he would have thought no death too cruel for this holy priest, whom he hated with such bitterness, but he dared not kill him for refusing to reveal a confession, because great trouble would have fallen upon himself for such an outrage, and it would have brought all Christian kings and emperors to punish him for it ; but he resolved to find some other excuse for ridding his domain of Master John, and

waited and watched until the opportunity came.

It would seem that God forewarned His servant of what would befall him, for, in a sermon which he preached publicly in the city of Prague, he spoke of the calamities which were coming, and afterwards set out on a pilgrimage to a well-known shrine of our Blessed Lady at Boleslau, to make ready by prayer for what he might have to bear.

In the southwestern part of Bohemia there was an old Benedictine abbot very near death, and Wenceslaus had determined when he was gone to turn the abbey-church into a cathedral, so that it might become the property of one of his favorite courtiers.

The abbot died, and his monks, after asking the opinion of John Nepomucene, elected another in his place so quickly that Wenceslaus had not time to carry out his plan, and angry as he was, there yet came a kind of wicked pleasure into his heart because he felt that he had now got the excuse he had

been longing for of persecuting Master John.

So he was seized and stretched upon the rack, and cruelly tortured, the wicked king himself holding a burning torch to the martyr's side. Then they ceased for awhile, and asked him once more would he tell what the Queen Sophia had confessed to him, but John was unmoved: he had heard and pardoned her sins in God's name, and no suffering, no torture, could ever bring them to the knowledge of men.

Then Wenceslaus gave orders that his hands should be tied behind his back, and his mouth kept open by a pointed piece of wood, and thus he should be taken through the streets and thrown over the bridge into the River Moldau.

The executioners obeyed, and John was dragged to his death; but God saw fit to glorify him in the eyes of the people who followed as he went along, for after life had gone his holy body floated upon the

water, while a miraculous light shone around his head.

The news soon spread through the city of Prague, and crowds gathered by the bank, and gazing upon the holy face saw the light playing around it. Then the priests from the cathedral went in procession, bearing torches, and brought the holy corpse to the church, and countless miracles were worked at the tomb.

Three hundred years after his death the tomb of this martyr was opened, and his tongue had the fresh appearance of life, and this, added to many other proofs of his sanctity, caused S. John Nepomucene to be canonized. Every year, upon the 16th of May, when his festival comes round, let us pray to this dear, faithful Saint for the grace of silence; let us ask him to get for us the desire to be very silent about other people's faults, and to say nothing about any little good actions we have done ourselves; let us ask him to help us to understand how God

loves to see us watching our words, so that we may say nothing to displease Him, and then we shall begin to learn the lesson of holy silence which springs from the life and glorious death of S. John Nepomucene.





S. John of God.

UR history to-day is of one who had wandered away from God and fallen into evil ways of life, but who was suddenly converted by the preaching of a sermon, and became afterwards a very great saint.

S. John, surnamed "of God," was a native of Portugal, the son of very poor and lowly parents, and during his childhood he spent an innocent and devout life; but when, in the year 1522, he enlisted in a company of foot-soldiers, he was led away by the example of bad companions and lost his fear of offending God.

This did not happen at once; it was by carelessness in things which seemed small, by

laying aside devout practices and trusting in his own strength, unaided by the grace of God, that he became what he was, until the infinite mercy and love of Jesus touched his heart.

In the year 1536, the troop to which he belonged was disbanded, and so he went into Spain and obtained employment from a rich lady as her shepherd. As a little boy, John had been in the same occupation under the chief shepherd of a Count in Castile, and perhaps returning to the old quiet life, which had been his when he was good and innocent, might have brought some thoughts of God, some longing to be rid of the burden of sin which loaded him; certainly, for the first time for many years, he began to think very seriously of changing his life and doing penance for his many offences against the Almighty. As his contrition deepened, John began to pray by day and night; continually grieving over the ingratitude he had shown to a God so good and merciful, and

he longed to know some way of making reparation by a life given up to divine service. At length he resolved to leave the place and go to comfort the poor slaves in Africa; but on his way he fell in with a Portuguese gentleman, who had been sentenced to banishment, and who, with his wife and children, was then journeying to Ceuta, in Barbary, in the custody of the king's officers, and John felt so sorry for him that he went too, and served him without any wages. When they reached Ceuta, this gentleman became so ill from the grief and trouble he had suffered, that he could do nothing to support his family, and John went out to work as a day-laborer, that he might earn money for them.

After this he returned to Gibraltar, where he turned peddler, and the thought came into his mind that if he sold little sacred pictures and books of devotion it might be a way of working for God, so he obtained some, and succeeded so well that he opened a shop in the city of Granada. All these efforts to

live a good life and make up for his past neglect were very pleasing to God, who was preparing for him graces of which he, as yet, knew nothing.

That year a very holy preacher and servant of our Lord, named John d'Avila, was preaching in Granada, and upon the festival of S. Sebastian, which is kept there always as a day of great rejoicing, John went to hear the sermon, and God, by the words of His Spirit, touched his heart with such intense love and sorrow that he burst into tears, and, forgetting all around, cried aloud for mercy from Heaven. His suffering, as he realized the love of Jesus and his own misery and sin, was such that he ran through the streets like one mad, tearing his hair and groaning; his one thought was of God — God offended by himself — and he heeded not the crowd, who jeered and pelted him with sticks and stones, so that he returned home covered with blood and bruises.

Feeling that nothing he could do was

too much to offer as penance, he parted with all he had in the world so as to be absolutely without anything, and allowed himself to be called mad, indulging in many absurdities, so that he might meet with more contempt and ill-treatment. Some persons, moved to compassion, took him to the great preacher, who was shown by God that John would receive unusual graces, and having talked with him and heard the confession of all his life, promised to guide and help him in the future. For a time John persisted in feigning madness, so that he was taken up and kept in a mad-house where they treated him severely, but he bore all with thankfulness as a just penance for past sin, until d'Avila told him he was sufficiently exercised in that method of humiliation.

John instantly obeyed, and became calm, and grave, to the surprise of his keepers, and for a time he was allowed to assist with the sick, until he left the hospital altogether.

This strange conduct was permitted by

God that he might quickly learn contempt for the esteem of the world, and prepare his soul for those graces which were to follow, and although we are not asked to imitate him in this way of humiliation, there is not one of us who may not ask and long for that spirit of contrition, that hatred of himself, which led him to despise the favorable judgments we are apt to prize so dearly.

John next made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe, to beg her intercession, and being resolved to devote himself to the relief of the poor, he began by selling wood in the market-place, so as to earn money to buy them food. His next step was to hire a house where he might shelter the sick and needy, and this was the simple foundation of the "Order of Charity," which God has blessed in every country. All day long the holy man waited upon his sick patients, and at night he sought provisions for them, and brought in fresh cases of distress, and at last people of the city began to help him with

gifts, and the archbishop gave him several sums of money and favored the work with his special protection.

All this had been done without John having a thought of founding a religious order, but a bishop, who was visiting Granada and had some conversation with him, was so filled with esteem for his holiness and usefulness that he bestowed on him the name of "John of God," and ordered him to wear a kind of religious habit.

There was a rich marquis who wished to find out if John had a true spirit of charity, so he disguised himself and came to beg alms, feigning to be in need, upon which he immediately received all the money which the Saint had in the house at that time. The marquis not only returned the sum he had been lent, but also bestowed upon him one hundred and fifty golden crowns, and while he stayed in Granada no day passed upon which he did not send to his hospital one hundred and fifty loaves, four sheep, and six pullets.

On one occasion the hospital took fire, and S. John carried most of the sick upon his own shoulders to places of safety, and although he passed through the flames continually, God gave His angels charge over him, and he was quite uninjured.

True charity is not bound up in one place or one good work, so John of God felt the same desire to assist suffering in every part of the country, and no one remained unrelieved whom it was in his power to assist, and he particularly loved to seek out public sinners with a crucifix in his hand, entreating them to be reconciled to the Saviour who had died for them. Humiliations were still his great happiness, although he had ceased to seek them in extravagant ways. One day a woman called him a hypocrite, and he was so delighted that he gave her secretly a piece of money, on condition that she would go and repeat her abuse aloud in the crowded market-place.

After ten years of hard work John became

ill. He had been the witness of a flood which was destroying the goods of many poor people, and on seeing one person in danger of being drowned he swam in his long robe to save him at the risk of his own life.

After this he began to feel ill, but he concealed it, lest he should be forced to labor less and diminish his penances; but he became so much worse that the news spread, and a noble lady came in her coach to visit him and see into the cause of his suffering. When she arrived John was lying in his little cell, covered with a piece of an old coat, and having for a pillow a basket, in which he used to collect food for his hospital, while the poor people stood weeping over him. The lady sent privately a message to the archbishop, who despatched an order to the holy man to go with her to her house, that he might receive care and nursing.

During this illness they often read to him the Gospel history of the Passion of Christ, and John complained that while his Master

drank gall and vinegar he, a wretched sinner, was given broths and other things. The whole city was begging that the Saint's life might be spared, but his work on earth was nearly done, and one day when the archbishop had said Mass in his room, heard his confession, and giving him the last Sacraments, he died upon his knees before the altar, being exactly fifty-five years old.

The clergy and nobles, the poor and the rich, clustered round the grave in which his body was laid to rest, and after many miracles had been wrought there, he was canonized as a saint. Though the life of John of God was one of active usefulness, he had a great love of prayer and contemplation, and was favored by many raptures and visions; but neither the esteem of men nor the special love of God disturbed the deep humility of his heart, for it rested upon the foundation of perfect contrition — that contrition which effaced the stains upon his soul — so that, like Mary Magdalen, many sins were forgiven him because he "loved much."



S. Alexis.



ANY centuries ago, in the days when Innocent the First was the Sovereign Pontiff, a rich senator of Rome was offering up prayers to God for the blessing of a son to bear his name and succeed to his wealth and position. Some years they prayed and waited, and then to this nobleman and his wife a child was born, whom they named Alexis.

The little boy seemed to be from infancy entirely devoted to God, and he grew daily more sweet, and humble, and pious, as time passed on. Being of a wealthy family, his clothing was rich and costly, but underneath the silk and gold he wore a rough hair-shirt,

and often wished that he could follow Jesus in poverty and suffering. In the world he appeared with a peaceful, smiling face ; but, upon his knees before the cross he would weep for hours over his sins, and promise his whole life, and love, and service to Almighty God alone.

The father of Alexis wished him to marry when he had reached a proper age, and chose as his wife a maiden who was as virtuous and beautiful as she was noble — one whom none could see without admiration and love. Alexis was sad and perplexed ; never yet had he disobeyed his father, and his entreaties had been powerless to prevent the command ; but, with the memory of that vow offered to God he dared not give affection to any human creature, and all that he could do was to pray to be helped and guided by Heaven. So the marriage-day drew on ; the ceremony was concluded amidst great pomp and rejoicing ; but Alexis had been inspired by God with a purpose which would preserve

his vow unbroken, and he disappeared from the gay assembly and they sought him everywhere in vain. When the bride was questioned, she could only say, weeping, that her husband had but given her a ring of gold, a girdle of precious stones, and a veil of purple, and then, exclaiming "Farewell!" had hurried away.

For some days they sought Alexis, and finding it impossible to obtain tidings of him, his father sent messengers to all countries and parts of the world, while his mother spread ashes upon the earth, and sat down mourning, and the young bride took off her ornaments, wore the attire of a widow, and, darkening her windows, wept constantly.

All this time Alexis had not been unmindful of the suffering he was causing to those who loved him; but the voice of God sounded clearly in his ear, bidding him leave parents, and home, and all else to follow Jesus, and he dared not linger; so, disguising himself in the dress of a pilgrim, he hurried

away from his native town and, getting into a little boat soon reached the mouth of the River Tiber, and then journeyed on to Mesopotamia, where he devoted himself to the service of the sick and the poor. He could not long remain unnoticed, because of his holy life, and his marked devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and people began to call him a saint, upon which Alexis grew alarmed, lest he might become proud and uplifted; therefore he left the place, and embarked in a ship bound for Tarsus. But a great tempest rose, and after many days the ship was driven back to the mouth of the Tiber, and Alexis found himself once more near his home and friends. Then he thought that as he was very much changed no one in the city would know him again, so he resolved to go and live upon the charity of those who had formerly been his friends. He was approaching his father's house when he saw him coming out, with several servants in attendance, and in humble words, Alexis

besought a refuge under his roof, and a few crumbs of bread. Euphemian looked at him, but did not know it was his son; yet his heart filled with pity for the poor beggar, and he ordered his servants to take care of him "For," said he, "my own son, Alexis, may be poor and homeless like this man."

The commands of Euphemian were not well obeyed, for, instead of taking care of Alexis, they lodged him in a hole under the marble steps, where all who passed could look on his misery, and the servants, finding that he never complained, mocked at him, and treated him with contempt, throwing dirt at him, and pulling his hair. All these trials Alexis endured with patience, and many others, which tried him far more. It was hard to witness the distress of his beloved mother—to see his wife, whose chamber window was just above him, look under the steps, weeping there, and exclaiming, "Oh! my Alexis, why hast thou espoused me and left me?" but at such times, if he

felt tempted to give and receive human affection, he turned to prayer for safety, and thus remained steadfast in his promise to love none but God.

Many years passed away, and Alexis grew weak and emaciated from his long suffering, and God revealed to him that his end was near. So he asked one of the servants of the house to get him a pen and some ink, and he wrote an account of his life, explaining the reason for which he had left his home, and put the letter in his bosom, until the hour when he should die.

About this time, upon a certain festival, Pope Innocent was celebrating High Mass in the presence of the emperor and his court, when a voice was heard to exclaim, "Seek out the holy servant of God who is about to depart this life, and who shall pray for the city of Rome!"

The people fell upon their faces from fear, and another voice spoke, saying, "Where is he to be found?" And the first voice an-

swered, "Seek him in the house of the noble Euphemian." Now Euphemian was close to the emperor, who said to him, "What! hast thou this holy man in thy house, and yet hast kept it secret? Let us seek him directly." So Euphemian went first to prepare the way for the emperor, and, as he drew near his home one of the servants came to meet him, saying, "The poor beggar whom thou didst shelter has died within the last hour, and we have laid him upon the steps of the door."

Then Euphemian ran up the steps and uncovered the beggar's face. Ah! it was like that of an angel now, for a glory of light came from it, and at the sight the rich man fell upon his knees, acknowledging that this poor despised creature was one of the chosen friends of the Almighty.

When the Pope and the emperor, with his court, drew near, they saw the letter in the dead hand of Alexis, and it was opened and read aloud before the whole assembly. No words could describe the feelings of Euphe-

mian when he knew that the beggar was his son — his loved and long-sought Alexis, who had for years dwelt beside him, unknown and uncared for. His mother, and the wife he had left upon the day of her espousals, rushed out and flung themselves down by the lifeless body, weeping bitterly, and for seven days remained there, refusing to be comforted, while people thronged to touch the sacred remains, and many were cured of their diseases. On the spot where Euphemian's house stood, where Alexis had suffered with resignation and humility so many years, a church was erected, which bears his name, and the marble steps beneath which he died are preserved in a side chapel, where there is a figure of the Saint, in the dress of a pilgrim, with his letter in his hand, and his staff by his side. Thus ended this strange life of separation from all natural ties for the love of God, and, hard and unattractive as it may seem to us who read it, we must remember that it was the path by which he was to reach

the reward of heaven, and thus only would he have become sanctified. There are saints who have lived always among their friends, and in their homes, finding it was God's will which kept them there; others have heard, like Alexis, the divine voice commanding them to leave every one, and endure loneliness and desolation; so, in different ways, the cross and the crown have been given to them all — in this world the trials, the persecution, the poverty, the loneliness of the cross; in heaven, the crown of reward, and the "Well done, good and faithful servant," of the great Master.





S. Bernard.



HERE was a time when a great evil seemed to be threatening the Church of Christ, when the love of wealth, and ease, and luxury was beginning to creep into the cloister among the friends and servants of God who had promised to follow Him in meekness and poverty. It was then that the Almighty raised up S. Bernard, whose holy life should have even a stronger and more widespread influence in promoting the love of the cross than his sweet persuasive eloquence of speech, who should restore the practice of austerity which had been falling into disuse in so many of the old monasteries.

Bernard was born in the little village of Fontaine, near Dijon, and he had a most devoted and pious mother, whose heart was turned to God, and who desired nothing for her children but that they should truly love and serve Him. Many holy lessons were taught him in those early days, especially that tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin which distinguished his entire life, and when he was old enough to leave home, he was sent to the college connected with the church of Chatillon to study. From the age of fifteen Bernard practised constant self-denial, and thus avoided many of the sins and follies of the young, for he never forgot that his mother had consecrated him to the service of the Church, and he desired to prepare himself as much as possible for the life of a religious. On one occasion he recollected himself at the very moment when he was gazing upon the beauty of a creature with pleasure, and so horrified was he at finding he could have any other thought than the

beauty of his crucified Saviour that he rushed into a pool of water which was more than half-frozen, remaining in it until all human feeling was utterly subdued. Soon after Bernard's studies were completed, and he returned home, his good mother died at the Castle of Fontaine, to his great grief, and after this event he endured many temptations before he could resolve to become a monk. At length he overcame all the hinderances which the evil spirit suggested to him, and not only conquered himself but won over an uncle and several of his brothers to devote their lives to God, and so the little company presented themselves before the abbot of a monastery in the forest of Citeaux, and, kneeling at his feet, begged to be admitted as novices. This was in the year 1113, and about two years later the abbey became so overcrowded that Bernard was appointed to found another monastery. His abbot chose from the brothers twelve monks, representing the twelve apostles, with Bernard for their

leader going first, cross in hand, as representing Christ, and thus they left the monastery and heard its doors close behind them, while they had to wander out into the world trusting in God to direct their steps.

They journeyed on until they reached a wilderness called the Valley of Wormwood, and there, at his bidding, was commenced the since famous Abbey of Clairvaux, and we may picture to ourselves the white-habited monks scattered in that lonely place, felling the trees, building huts to shelter them until their monastery was ready, tilling and sowing the ground until it became a land of vines and corn instead of a wilderness.

In a very few years the name of Bernard of Clairvaux rang through the Christian world as a model of sanctity and austerity, and yet he was sweet, loving, and wise also. Lords appealed to him in differences and disagreements, and he made peace; those ecclesiastics who needed difficult theological questions decided came to Bernard, and were

convinced by his judgment, — because he was doing God's work in humble dependence upon divine strength he was successful in all his undertakings.

He had sought the life of a monk that he might die to the world and sanctify himself in seclusion, but God's providence forced him into this prominent post that he might save the world he had renounced from many calamities.

Pope Eugenius IV. commanded S. Bernard to preach a second crusade, so that Christians might be roused to fight for the holy places consecrated by the life and death of Christ, and although he was at that time suffering from sickness he at once prepared to obey.

From town to town he passed in company with two of his monks, preaching to immense multitudes in the churches, working many miracles, exhorting all who could to enroll themselves as the soldiers of Christ. During this journey he entered the Cathedral

of Spires in the company of the Emperor Conrad and many nobles, and there, in the presence of all, he approached the altar reciting the beautiful "Salve Regina." At the words "O clemens" he fell upon his knees, then rising, exclaimed, "O pia," and knelt again, and once more, as he uttered, "O dulcis Virgo Maria," he knelt in humble worship of the Blessed Mother of God. In memory of this incident these words were inscribed upon the pavement where it took place.

After this hymn, the Saint preached a sermon so eloquent and so appealing that it led the emperor himself to ask for the badge of the red cross, and numbers were impelled to start for the wars in Palestine. But the crusade was not successful; of the multitudes who joined it few returned, and, sad to relate, they soon forgot the holy purpose for which they had been gathered together, and great sins prevailed in the camp: the army never reached Jerusalem, and had to retreat with shame and defeat.

It was a great sorrow to S. Bernard to witness the disgrace which the Christians had brought upon themselves, and, besides this, he had to bear the anger of the people, who were enraged because they deemed him a false prophet, but this feeling soon gave place to sorrow and shame when S. Bernard denounced their sins, and said they had not deserved the protection of Heaven.

The health of this great Saint soon became very feeble, yet he employed himself constantly in writing those homilies and letters which have been prized by the Church in all succeeding ages, and many times visions of his Blessed Mother were granted to console him in suffering and to inspire his pen.

There is a beautiful old story, which tells that once when the holy Abbot of Clairvaux was engaged in study, Mary appeared to him, and as he knelt in loving devotion, she uncovered her bosom and caused a stream of milk to fall upon his lips, so that from that time they should be endowed with such per-

suasive sweetness that none who heard it could resist his appeals as he spoke of the sufferings of Jesus and the love of His Mother.

While he dwelt at Clairvaux the sister of S. Bernard, who was the wife of a rich nobleman, came to pay him a visit attended by a large number of servants, but he was so annoyed by the pomp and display that he refused to see her. Then Humbeline asked for another of her brothers, who was a monk there, but he, following the example of Bernard, refused also. Upon this the lady burst into tears, and falling on her knees, entreated that the Saint would instruct her as to what was her duty; and at this humble supplication Bernard appeared at a side gate and told her to return home and imitate her mother. It was a great humiliation for Humbeline, but it did a work in her soul which no long and affectionate interview could have wrought, and she afterwards became as humble and pious as she had before

been proud and worldly, and gave herself entirely to God.

The long and austere penances of this holy monk, united with his labors, broke down his health, and, after a few years of weakness and suffering, he died, in the sixty-third year of his age, surrounded by his brethren, at peace with God and man. His anxieties, his labors, were over then, and he was at rest in that "dear, dear country" of his desire, those many mansions of which he sang so sweetly, for the possession of which he had been ready to toil and wait until God stilled the busy pen, and silenced the eloquent tongue, and called S. Bernard home.





S. Francis of Sales.

AT the Castle of Sales, near Annecy, about three hundred years ago, the holy countess of the noble family who dwelt there was praying fervently to God that the little child which He was soon to give her might be very good, and that it might die rather than grow up to become His enemy.

Her prayers were heard ; for the little boy Francis showed from his earliest infancy an unusual sweetness of disposition, loving God as soon as he began to know Him. The first words he uttered distinctly were these : " God and my mother love me well." And this realization of the infinite charity of God grew

with his growth, and resulted in that spirit of sweetness and charity to others, for the love of Jesus, which distinguished his character as a man.

The good countess who had prayed so much for the little unborn child, prayed more now as she saw his innocence and holiness, entreating God to keep him pure and unspotted from the world, and she delighted to witness his pleasure in reading holy books, his unwearying happiness when in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, and the love to the poor and the self-denial he would practise to assist them. Francis was also a clever child, and apt to learn; and when he began to study at the College of Annecy, he made rapid progress; still this love of learning never interfered with his service of God, and as early as twelve years of age his heart was so fixed upon the hope of becoming a priest, that, with the consent of his father, he received the tonsure.

A few years later, the parents of Francis

sent him to Paris, where he went through a course of theological instruction under the Jesuits, and during this time he acquired that intimate knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures which distinguished him. He still frequented the churches constantly, and was never seen about in the city for amusement — only in going to and from college or church. S. Etienne-des-Grès was the favorite resort, because it was so retired; and there, before an image of the Blessed Virgin, he made a vow of belonging only to her and her divine Son as long as life should last.

At about sixteen years of age it pleased God to let this Saint be very much tempted to despair of salvation, and this idea made him so unhappy that he grew quite ill, but could not be persuaded to tell any one the cause of his distress. This miserable thought remained with him a whole month, during which he wept bitterly by night and by day; but at last the Holy Spirit put it into his heart to go to his favorite church, and kneel-

ing before the figure of the Blessed Virgin — where he had made his vow — he begged her to pray that, even if he was so wretched as to be doomed to separation from God for eternity, he might at least love and serve Him all his life on earth. With many tears he recited the “Memorare,” but no sooner had he finished this prayer than in an instant the temptation of the evil one left him, and his soul was once more filled with peace and joy. No doubt this month of trial and misery was permitted to happen to Francis because God, who knows all the future, knew that he would in after years be a great director of souls, and it would guide him in helping any who were greatly tempted, if he had first passed through the same difficulties.

After staying a long time in Paris, his father sent Francis to Padua, and it was there he planned a rule of life for himself, which has been preserved carefully up to the present time, and has been a help to many other young people, — directing them how to arm

themselves against the temptations of the world by the habit of living in the presence of God. From Padua he went to Rome, and from there to Loretto, where he renewed his vow made under the protection of Mary, and then returned home to the Castle of Sales, where he was received with every mark of joy.

The father of Francis had formed many plans for his son's worldly success, and had obtained for him a post which would have won him much public esteem; but the Saint steadily refused all these offers, and declared his unchanged intention of giving himself to God's service.

Just at first his father raised difficulties, but they all were cleared away by the hand of God, and Francis was made Provost of the Cathedral at Annecy, where he began to preach with so much fervor that thousands of souls were converted to God. His next mission was to try, by the command of his bishop, to restore the Catholic faith in that part of the

country near the Lake of Geneva, which was full of heresy ; and here he toiled some years, encountering hatred and persecution — even risking his life among the bitter enemies of Christ, and yet bringing many souls to a knowledge and love of the truth. It was his great gentleness and sweetness of manner which won so many hearts and gained so many victories for God, and we are told that he never left the pulpit without being followed by multitudes of people — some wishing to confess their sins and be reconciled to God, others seeking to be instructed in religious things.

Upon the death of the Bishop of Geneva, Francis succeeded him in that dignity, and, in order to prepare himself for his new duties, he made a long retreat, during which he formed a new rule for his future life.

One of the greatest works of S. Francis of Sales was the guidance of S. Jane Frances de Chantal, so as to fit her for the place God had assigned to her in this world, as a religious of

the Order of the Visitation, and to lead her up in spiritual things to the perfection which she attained, and which won her crown in heaven.

When this good bishop first knew Madame de Chantal she had been suffering much from the loss of her husband, and was sad and troubled; but he soon helped her to seek comfort from God, and her heart found peace and rest, though the brightness of earthly hope and joy was over.

Her little children were very fond of S. Francis, and would run with arms outstretched to meet him, and cluster round his chair, answering his questions and listening to his words. As the girls grew older, and showed many little faults of vanity, Francis never failed to rebuke them, but it was always with gentle kindness, which made them reverence him more than ever, and won their confidence entirely.

At one time Françoise de Chantal seemed in great danger of becoming engrossed with

the world, but the holy bishop begged her to make him one simple promise — to say a “Hail Mary” every day, *with all her heart*; and, because it was his request, she gave her word never to omit this one prayer, and the Blessed Virgin kept her from harm.

S. Francis spent a great deal of time in drawing up the rules for the Order of the Visitation, and in visiting and instructing Mother de Chantal and her nuns, so that many people said, scornfully, that “the Bishop of Geneva wasted time with a few simple women;” but he heard such speeches without being influenced by them, and continued with his usual sweetness to give both care and thought to the guidance of those nuns who were chosen by God for the purpose of establishing an order which has been such a glory and blessing to the whole Catholic world.

Thus the good bishop’s life passed in zealous work for his divine Master; he preached eloquent sermons, he wrote innumerable let-

ters of sweetness and wisdom to all who needed his counsel, he heard confessions and received those who went to seek help or teaching. But it was not for Francis to live to an advanced age, and in the year 1522 he became seriously ill. He was then in attendance upon the court of Savoy, at Lyons, where, instead of staying in the luxurious apartments prepared for him, he insisted on lodging in a little cottage belonging to the gardener of one of the monasteries of the Visitation.

He preached and performed his usual duties during some days of pain, and then was obliged to take to his bed. In those days severe remedies were used by surgeons, and hot irons were applied behind his neck, and caustic to his head, which gave him intense suffering; but though the tears were forced from his eyes by the agony he endured, his soul was steadfastly fixed upon God, in complete resignation, and, instead of complaints, none but the holy words of Scripture fell

from his lips. Many times he exclaimed, "Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquities, and cleanse me from my sin;" for in his humility he believed he deserved these and far worse pains.

After receiving the last Sacraments, on the evening of the Feast of the Holy Innocents, S. Francis passed away from earth to heaven, being then not quite fifty-five years old, and he was buried near the high altar in the church of the Visitation convent at Annecy, amidst the tears and lamentations of the people who had known and loved him so truly.

In closing this Life we must seek to learn the lessons it teaches us. The sweet gentleness and love of S. Francis of Sales is the thought which always comes with the mention of his name, but we must not suppose it was a purely natural sweetness which required no effort, no struggle against self. The Saint has himself said that he was especially tempted to anger, that he often felt it very hard and difficult to control impatient

words and thoughts, but yet he conquered with God's grace, and the same means of grace are open to each one of us if we will but seek them constantly and use them well. We might all be saints, if we were not so weak, so ungenerous, so sadly unfaithful. We might all conquer our love of ease, our love of pleasure, our vanity, our pride—or whatever may be our special fault and temptation—if we would but strive as those holy servants of God did, if we felt the same mistrust of self and confidence in our dear Lord which kept them safe. But we will not do these things: we tire of the struggle and the self-denial, and thus we remain full of sins and imperfections, which grieve God and hold us back from getting the grace He wants to give us. So, as we close our story of this Saint we must turn with fresh hope and courage to Him whom he served, asking for love, which will make us press forward on the way to heaven, and count everything worthless which will not lead us there.

“O God, by whose gracious Will the blessed Francis, thy Confessor and Bishop, became all things to men for the saving of their souls, mercifully grant that, being filled with the sweetness of Thy love, we may, through the guidance of his counsels and by the aid of his merits, attain unto the joys of the life everlasting. Amen.”





S. Augustine.

A. D. 430.

IT was in the year 354 that the gentle, holy Monica gave birth to a son by whom she was destined to suffer much bitter sorrow, yet sorrow which in the end became joy and thanksgiving.

From the life of this sainted mother we learn something of the care with which she trained Augustine's early years, and of the prayers by which she sought the blessing of Heaven upon his life when he had to do battle with the world's temptations.

The boy began at an early age to show indications of future talent, and at the town of

Madaura he advanced in the study of grammar and rhetoric until, at fifteen years of age, he returned to his home for a year.

By that time Patricius, his pagan father, had means of sending Augustine to finish his education at Carthage; where he was constantly taking part in dangerous amusements, which led him away from God and into the power of the Evil One.

Deeply as he sinned at this period of his life, Augustine did not throw aside his studies, and even would read in the Holy Scriptures, although their simplicity caused him to turn away from what appeared suited only to the capacity of a child.

It must have been difficult indeed for the holy Monica to believe in the assurance God had given her that the life of this son would be good and holy — only a very perfect and simple faith could have borne the test. But such a faith had S. Monica, and the sinful excesses of her unhappy son only served to increase the earnestness of her prayers, the

constant offering up of her sufferings and penances for his conversion.

In those early times certain heresies were rife ; one of these — the heresy of the Manichees — was one which continued the longest. To this delusion Augustine fell a prey, to the great grief of his mother, who was however somewhat consoled when a holy bishop to whom she revealed her distress, said to her : —

“Go away, and God bless thee. The son of these tears shall not be lost.”

After a time Augustine began to distrust the Manichean heresy, and turned to a thorough disbelief in all systems of religion.

It was not long afterwards that, through the interest of friends, he was appointed professor of rhetoric at Milan, in which city he arrived in the year 384. During his stay there Augustine was strongly moved by the preaching of S. Ambrose to repentance and the desire of being a Christian, and gradually his mind was enlightened to the knowledge

and love of the truth, so that in the year 387 he received baptism.

It had been God's purpose to prolong the life of S. Monica until she received this answer to her years of prayer; she died soon afterwards, and Augustine went to his old home near Tagaste, where he gathered round him a few friends who likewise wished to devote themselves to penance, prayer, and good works.

Thus began the Order of S. Augustine, which afterwards became so widely spread. Unanimity and charity were the two special graces which were to distinguish the brethren that so they might be of one heart and soul in the Lord.

Even their garments were held as common property, one brother taking charge of all. During the day any one might retire to the oratory for private prayer, and in community the office was recited at the appointed hours.

Although the fasting was strict, those who were weak or ill were exempted from its

obligation. One of the chief duties of the brethren was the care of the poor.

The nuns of the Order of S. Augustine were governed by much the same rule, and though not strictly enclosed, they were enjoined to preserve great recollection when called outside their convent by necessity, and always to be in the company of at least three others.

When Augustine had spent some two years at Tagaste, he was presented to Valerius, Bishop, for Holy Orders, to which he was admitted in the year 391.

But desiring still to live in great retirement, the Bishop allowed him to use a house belonging to the church of Hippo, and here Augustine collected a community of such as desired the more perfect service of Almighty God.

In the year 395 he was consecrated a Bishop, to be coadjutor with Valerius, upon whose death he remained in sole charge of the diocese.

Elevated now to a high dignity, S. Augustine still preserved great simplicity of life, but feeling it a duty to show greater hospitality than was suitable or convenient to his brethren, he left them to reside in the Bishop's house, where he formed a community of clergy — the foundation of the Order of the Augustinian Canons.

In the year 430 Africa was desolated by the incursions of the Vandals, and with extreme grief Augustine beheld the danger, not only of the body, but of the souls of many. He with his brethren cried earnestly to God for mercy and help; but in the third month of the siege a violent fever attacked him, which resulted in his death upon the 28th of August, when he had entered his seventy-seventh year.

For nearly fifty years Augustine's body rested in the Church of S. Stephen, but when the African bishops were banished into Sardinia they carried it with them. About the year 710 the remains of the Saint were

translated to Pavia, and taken into the Church of S. Peter in that city.

Very numerous are the writings of S. Augustine — one of the most noted being a lasting memorial of his deep penitence, entitled his "Confessions."

The ordinary emblem of S. Augustine is a heart, sometimes burning, as a type of his ardent zeal and charity. He is frequently also represented with the Holy Child by his side, holding in His hand a shell. This refers to a vision once granted the Saint with which we may fitly close the story of his life.

While one day walking upon the sea-shore, thinking deeply of heavenly things, he beheld a little child who was engaged in the attempt to fill a hole in the sand with water taken from the sea in a shell. The Saint asked the child what he was about.

"I want to empty the sea into this hole," replied the little one.

"Child! it is impossible!" cried Augustine.

"Not more impossible than for you to comprehend what you are now meditating upon," replied the vision, immediately vanishing, while Augustine pondered in his heart the lesson God had thus miraculously impressed upon him.





S. Boniface.

A. D. 755.

AT Crediton, somewhere about the year 680, there dwelt a Saxon family of royal blood and of great piety, to whom God gave a child who received the name of Winfred — a name afterwards changed to that of Boniface.

At that time there were no settled priests ruling over their different parishes in England as now. They travelled from one place to another to offer the Holy Mass and administer the sacraments, taking up their abode meanwhile with some family who could receive them. Thus it happened that the father of little Winfred frequently entertained the ministers of God beneath his roof,

and at so early an age as three years the child would leave all his amusements at the sight of a monk, and beg for stories of the Saints, or ask simple questions about God and heaven.

Scarcely was Winfred six years old than he declared his wish to give himself to God's service; but his father, not unnaturally, smiled at the thought which appeared but a childish fancy, and, gazing at the boy's beautiful countenance, felt it would be hard indeed to bury one so gifted with talent, so attractive in manner and appearance, in the seclusion of the cloister.

But soon the father found that Winfred's was not the passing fancy of a little child, and he grew alarmed, nay, almost displeased. When the boy talked of his desire, they sought to work upon his sensitive and loving nature by speaking of the necessary separation from family and friends; they told, too, of the loss of wealth and rank, and yet the little Winfred remained of the same

mind, nor faltered for a moment in the wish to belong wholly to God.

The father now fell seriously ill, and believing he was upon his deathbed, he began to think seriously, and it was clear to him then that he had been thwarting his little son's desire after heavenly things. Repenting of this, he strove to make amends by sending the boy without delay to a Benedictine house not far from Exeter.

Though but little more than six years old, Winfred did not grieve to bid farewell to home; in spite of his noble birth, he felt a joy in wearing the same coarse habit as the monks wore, in taking his small share in the hard labor which in that age formed part of their daily life, in eating the same poor and scanty food. If all this seemed at times difficult, the little boy kept his mind fixed upon the example of Jesus and the Saints, and tried to be both cheerful and obedient. Winfred's great joy was even then found in prayer, and with reading and study the years

passed swiftly and peacefully along, until he was a child no longer, but an intelligent and holy youth.

He now was sent from Exminster to the abbey of Nutselle in Hampshire, which was more suited to his future studies, being not only one of the best schools in England, but possessing a valuable library.

Here Winfred made rapid progress in learning, and became famous for his excellent manner of instructing others in the truths of the Holy Scriptures, which had just been translated into Anglo-Saxon by the venerable Bede.

At thirty years of age Winfred was ordained priest, and soon afterward was chosen to undertake some important business with the Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he managed so well that it led to his being engaged in several other matters which required great ability and judgment.

While rising rapidly in the esteem of men, Winfred ever maintained the humble, docile

spirit of a child, and this sweetness of character gave him a wonderful influence over human hearts.

It was now that a strong desire to teach the faith to their kindred in Germany began to kindle in the Anglo-Saxon people ; many went forth to those wild forests to preach the Gospel, and among them Winfred, who in the year 716 embarked for Friesland.

But war was raging there, the time for converting the Frisians was later, and thus Winfred returned to Nutselle, and was soon afterward chosen Abbot in place of Winbert, who had lately died.

But Winfred's heart was away in the wild country where there were souls to be won for God, and he only consented to govern the community until another could be found for the office ; that done, he left England for the second time in the early spring of 718, and never returned to it again.

He first went to Rome, joining some pilgrims in a wearying foot-journey, depending

chiefly for food upon the charity of those they met with, and it was autumn before Winfred arrived in the Eternal City.

After visiting the tomb of S. Peter, he presented himself to Pope Gregory II., who received him affectionately and approved his plans, but kept him during the winter at Rome, frequently instructing him as to his future work in evangelizing the Germans.

For thirty years Winfred travelled about doing God's work amidst difficulties and hardships which cannot be described, but he was successful in converting thousands of pagans, and in instructing many who, though Christian in name, were ignorant in the matter of the doctrines of their faith.

When other monks and nuns came out from England to help in the missionary work, Winfred built rough huts of wood to serve as churches and convents for them, nor did they mind how poor and hard was their life if so they might bring others into the fold of Christ.

Winfred made a second visit to Rome in the year 723, where he received the name of Boniface, and was consecrated Bishop; later he was made Papal Legate and Archbishop, and about 748 was raised to the dignity of Archbishop of Mayence and Primate of Germany.

Great in rank, in esteem, in learning, Boniface remained the same humble, simple soul as he had been when he was the monk Winfred in the quiet abbey of Nutselle, and pure of heart as in the days of childhood in his early home.

Many a time he pleaded his age as an excuse for being released from his dignities, but never did he plead it as an excuse from labor.

At length, in the spring of 753, Boniface received permission to transfer the Archbishopric to one of his friends and pupils, Lullus, and free from that duty, he now, at seventy years of age, started on a mission to Friesland.

With eleven companions, the venerable white-haired old man began his labors, preaching with an eloquence which drew crowds to listen and afterward to repent and turn from their sins.

On the fifth day of June, 755, a large number of converts were to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Quietly reading the Gospels he awaited their arrival, never heeding an increasing sound as of voices, for he believed it to be his expected friends drawing nearer. Suddenly the attendants rushed to S. Boniface to tell him that a tribe of Pagans was speeding along to attack him, and they would have armed themselves for resistance had not the aged man bid them remember the example of Christ, and return good for evil. Turning to his clergy he begged them not to cast away the reward of their long devotion, but to meet death firmly and manfully, that so Christ may receive them into joy everlasting. As he spoke the Pagans rushed upon the little group, cutting down one after

another, and, last of all, the holy Boniface. As he felt the blow descending, he raised his hand to Heaven, still clasping the Gospels • which he had been reading, and the book was almost cut in two by the stroke of the savage's dirk, which despatched him from earth to the eternal joy of heaven. The 5th of June is kept as the festival of this great Saint and martyr, whose name is held in special veneration in Germany to this day.





S. Thomas of Villanova.

A. D. 1555.



HERE was joy in the household of a family of Villanova in Castile when, in the year 1488, a son was born to them; there was joy too in many another home, for God had caused the glory of a miracle to shed its radiance around the birth of the little Thomas, and upon the day he came into the world the plague which had been raging suddenly disappeared.

His parents felt that this child was destined to do some special work for God, and therefore they strove to fit him for such service by a careful training in his earliest years. Happily for Thomas, his mother

sought God's help in every duty by fervent prayer, and now each morning saw her carrying her infant son into her oratory, where before an image of Mary Immaculate she consecrated him to God and that Virgin Mother, begging that his heart might be early penetrated with Divine love.

As the child began to observe what passed around him, this wise mother kept strict watch over his attendants so that not a word should be spoken which could injure his innocence, and the first words she taught him were words of prayer.

The little boy needed not to be reminded of holy things, for he delighted in them above all else, and could no sooner walk than he would hide himself in the garden or in some retired corner to pray to God.

Close by the home of this pious family there was a Franciscan convent, the chapel of which was open to the public; and whenever the bell rang for a sermon, the little Thomas was sure to appear first of all the

congregation, and his attention to the preacher was wonderful to see. When it was over he would collect other children together, and mounting on some stone repeat to them what he had heard in the chapel, which he did so well that many older persons loved to listen to him.

He was not very fond of play, unless there was some imitation of some ceremony of the Church, when he would join his young companions with all his heart.

The parents of this boy had long been remarkable for their extreme charity to the poor, and Thomas resembled them in his goodness of heart towards all who were in any need. The sight of a beggar would bring tears to his eyes, and he was ready to deprive himself of food or money if he might thus be permitted to assist the distressed.

Each morning the boy went to school, remaining there till afternoon; but he never could be persuaded to eat his breakfast before starting, and his mother discovered that he

was in the habit of taking it with him that he might bestow it on the first beggar he met.

It was not a rare thing to find Thomas returning to his home without his shoes or some other article of dress, which he had bestowed upon some poor creature who had asked alms. One day his mother gave him a new suit, which he received unwillingly though in silence. Some hours later he went out, and meeting a child of his own size in very tattered clothing he exchanged garments in some retired corner, returning home with confidence that his mother would not be displeased.

On being questioned he cried, "My good mother, I met a little boy to whom I have given my clothes, and he, as you see, has let me have his. I knew you would forgive me." So pleased was his mother to see the unselfish love of her child's heart that she smiled upon him as she assured him that he had acted rightly.

Thomas displayed also from his early child-

hood a penitential spirit rare in one so young ; fasting was a joy to him, especially as it enabled him to have food to bestow on others, and he accustomed his tender body to the hair-shirt and discipline at an age when other boys would have no other thought or desire than amusement.

It was a sorrowful moment to the loving parents when they felt compelled to send their son from them to continue his studies at Alcala, in the year 1503, where he remained for about three years.

Little is told of this period of his life, but that little conveys to us the thought of a studious and diligent youth, who preserved his love of prayer and contemplation in the midst of the many temptations and worldly influences which beset every student.

At eighteen years of age Thomas came back to Villanova to visit his parents for a time, but he returned again to the university of Alcala, where he became a professor when his scholarship ended. The position the

Saint now occupied seemed as favorable to his piety as to his intellectual pursuits, and yet he was not satisfied. He felt a great attraction to religious life, and yet he desired to be of some Order which was engaged in some direct work for the help of the poor, and was giving his mind to the study of the different communities existing in Spain when his father's death occurred.

This sad event recalled Thomas to Villanova for the consolation of his mother, and that he might carry out the wishes of the departed one; and it was then he decided to give up the house now his own for a hospital, a good work in which his mother assisted by furnishing it, and supplying linen necessary for use.

It was at this time that S. Thomas received the offer of a high position in the college at Salamanca, but he declined it, feeling sure that God called him to a religious life, and in November, 1526, he entered an Augustinian convent in the city.

The day upon which his clothing took place was passed in the most profound recollection, and was a day he ever recalled with joy and gratitude to God.

He regarded the beginning of his novitiate as the beginning of his true conversion to God, and he applied himself especially to the exercise of prayer, humility, and abstinence.

In 1517 he pronounced his final vows, and spent the next year in preparing himself for the priestly office.

During his life in the community at Salamanca his excessive love of penance could only be restrained by the perfect obedience which he practised.

It was upon the feast of Christmas that he said his first Mass, with a love and fervor indescribable — such a heavenly peace shone upon his face, such tears of joy streamed from his eyes, that all who beheld him felt their hearts profoundly moved by the spectacle of his devotion.

It was not long before S. Thomas was

made Prior of the monastery of Salamanca, and afterwards Provincial—in every office he acted with a wisdom and charity which edified all with whom he had to deal.

Wonderful success attended the preaching of this servant of God, and when a sermon from him was expected the church would be crowded long before the appointed hour.

It was thus that a great change was brought about in the city of Salamanca. During Lent the amusements in which the people had been in the habit of indulging were given up, the churches were frequented, and the inhabitants of the city attended to their religious duties with great regularity.

It was among the young that S. Thomas did a very great and special work, and under his teaching the students of the university gained the esteem of every one by their piety of life and good example.

Much might we say of the career of S. Thomas as a priest, as a missionary, and also as a bishop; but our story would be too

long if we gave the details of his holy actions, the favors God awarded him, and the work he was permitted to accomplish in the souls of others.

As charity to the poor was one of the distinguishing virtues of his life, we may select some few examples before looking at the close of his earthly labors.

A weaver fell ill, and meanwhile his wife and children were reduced to great distress. S. Thomas, hearing of this, sent for the man and asked him what sum he owed to set him up again. With some hesitation the weaver said it would take a hundred ducats. But the good Bishop did not hesitate; sending for his treasurer he had the money given into the hands of the grateful man, whom he hurried away that he might escape his heartfelt thanks.

There was a woman who after her husband's death found it hard work to live and support her six children, and the holy S. Thomas, knowing of her difficulty, asked if

she had thought of any way in which she could comfortably maintain herself. The widow answered that her father had been a miller, and she therefore knew how to grind flour and bake bread. The good Bishop said little, but went home, and soon after the poor woman's heart was made glad by the present of a donkey, some flour, kneading troughs, and all else she needed to carry on her trade.

S. Thomas felt a great interest in young people who were marrying and beginning life. A story showing his kindness in such a case is told much after this fashion : —

A tailor of Valencia had received an order to make some article of clothing for the Bishop, and knowing his customer had the character of being very liberal, this man put on an extra charge for his work, believing that a few shillings more than the proper price would escape notice.

Not so, however. The good Bishop was charitable, but he would not permit an impo-

sition, and he refused to pay the money, thereby making the tailor furiously angry, and he declared to his neighbors that S. Thomas was just as stingy as anybody else.

Some time after this same man was greatly troubled; trade was bad with him, and for want of a respectable dowry he could not marry his three daughters.

Every one bade him go for help to the Archbishop, and at last he braved the difficulty and went. He was received most kindly, with the promise that if he returned upon the following day with his parish priest, twenty pounds for each of his daughters should be given him.

When the time came, instead of twenty pounds he received double, and when in shame for his past complaining he threw himself at the Archbishop's feet, he was raised with great kindness by that fatherly hand.

"Ah!" said the Saint, "you thought me a stingy miser, but I did not care for money; I only wanted it for the poor. God grant

that when I die He shall not find me with a penny of my own."

Thus passed the years of S. Thomas of Villanova's life in exercises of piety and charity. At length came to him the glad promise of death.

Kneeling upon the Feast of the Purification before his crucifix, a voice seemed to issue from it, which told him that upon the Festival of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin, he should be called from earth to share in the joys of heaven.

The months passed on, and at the close of August the Saint grew ill; and he understood what was coming, so he made a general confession in preparation for death.

Three days before the Festival the physicians pronounced him better, which was a great consolation to all who loved him; but S. Thomas made use of the remaining time in dispensing his money to the hospitals, and for the maintenance of little orphan children, for whom he had ever felt a great tenderness.

When the day dawned on which he knew his soul would pass into the hands of his Creator he asked that Holy Mass might be celebrated in his presence; and at the moment of the priest's communion he died, it being the year 1555, the sixty-seventh of his age, and the eleventh of his dignity as Archbishop.

When the cathedral bells announced the tidings to the people, universal grief prevailed. The shops were closed, and every one felt that a great misfortune had befallen Valencia. Well might they sorrow at the loss of one so holy, so benevolent, and so loving a father and friend to the least among his flock; but in heaven the angels rejoiced, as one more of Christ's faithful servants was admitted into the glorious band of Saints who are gathered around the throne of God forever.



S. Peter, Apostle and Martyr.

A. D. 65.



IMON, afterwards named Peter, the son of Jonas, a fisherman of Bethsaida, was one of those disciples especially favored by Christ, and the one chosen by Him to be the Prince of the Apostles and the rock or foundation of His Church on earth.

Being circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law, he then received the name of Simon, a name very common among the Jews: it was our Lord who changed or added to it the name of Peter, which signifies a stone or rock.

According to the testimony of ancient writers, the wife of S. Peter was the daughter of Aristobulus, a brother of S. Barnabas; but when, at the call of the Master, Peter left his net and all that he had, he also gave up the earthly tie and the earthly love to follow Jesus.

When the promised gift of the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles in the day of Pentecost, and power was bestowed on them to speak in different languages, the people of Jerusalem came to see, and, full of astonishment at so great a marvel, accused them of being "filled with new wine."

S. Peter now stood up and declared that neither he nor his companions were excited by wine, but that the prophecy had been accomplished, the promise fulfilled, and the Spirit of God with its sevenfold gifts had been poured out upon them. Strong now in grace, he fearlessly preached of Jesus, and proved from their own Scripture that the despised and crucified Nazarene was indeed

the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world which had rejected Him.

So powerful was the effect of his address, so powerful too his appeal to the hearts of the people, that we read three thousand men and women then declared themselves believers.

The Temple was situated in the midst of a large space enclosed by an outer wall, in which wall were many gates leading to different courts, one of which was called the gate Beautiful.

There was a poor lame man in the city whose friends carried him daily to this gate, hoping that those who passed by to the Temple might pity him and give him alms.

As S. Peter with S. John went up together to the Temple one day, they saw this poor man and felt great compassion for his state. Taking him by the hand, S. Peter bade him, in the name of Jesus, rise up and walk. By the power of God, at the command of His servant, the poor beggar rose from the ground, not standing only, but able

to walk — and even, as Scripture tells us, “leaping,” — so that he accompanied the Apostles to the Temple, there to make his thanksgiving for so wonderful a cure of his long infirmity.

He had long been a familiar object to the people of Jerusalem, and when the news of the miracle spread about the city, a crowd collected to behold the change which seemed almost impossible to believe from common report.

S. Peter took the opportunity of preaching to this curious, wondering multitude, and again his success was great, for five thousand became Christians.

The Jewish Sanhedrim, or Council, was sitting in a court close by, and when it was told there that people were being converted to the Christian faith, the members of the Council were indignant, and resolved to stop the spread of doctrines which they hated most bitterly. To effect this purpose, they ordered the seizure and imprisonment of the

Apostles upon the charge of disturbing the peace of the people, and in the morning S. Peter and S. John were brought before the High-priest, and the rulers, elders, and scribes.

On being asked by what power and in what name he worked miracles, S. Peter preached Christ to the Council, and they, knowing that he had been but an humble fisherman of Bethsaida, marvelled at such an address coming from his lips. Dismissing the prisoners while they consulted together, they said: "What shall we do with these men?"

S. Peter and S. John were then recalled and told that for that time they might go free, but they must teach no more in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

It was impossible for the Apostles to obey such a command, for had not an authority far above that of any earthly council bidden them "preach the Gospel to every creature?" When they said this, the High-priest was

still forced to let them go, because the people just then were so pleased and impressed with the miracle they had actually witnessed, that their anger would have been excited against the Council had any punishment been inflicted upon these wonderful Christian teachers.

A warm love united these primitive Christians; they were like the members of one large family, each desiring and promoting the welfare of the rest. Thus it was that they who were richer sold both lands and houses, and gave the money to the Apostles for the use of their poorer brethren.

There was among the Christians a man named Ananias, who with his wife Sapphira had considerable possessions. Like others, they prepared to part with their worldly goods; but the generous heart and fervent charity were lacking, and no other than the motive of human respect prompting them, it is not strange that they fell under a very great temptation.

The Evil One suggested to the minds of these two, that it was an easy thing to give a part of the money which they had received as the price of their land — they might keep the rest for their own use and yet appear as generous as their neighbors.

When Ananias came into the presence of S. Peter with the money in his hand, and the false heart and false tongue, it was permitted to the Apostle to know what was concealed in his thoughts, and he told him of the sin by which he had lied not unto men but “unto God.”

The awful judgment of the Almighty fell upon the guilty man in that moment, for he fell dead before S. Peter and was carried out and buried immediately.

Not long after, Sapphira came in, ignorant still of the doom of Ananias, and yet ready to repeat the lie upon which they had agreed.

When S. Peter asked her what price had been given for the land, she, like her husband, hesitated not to speak falsely, and then in a

moment she also was struck dead, thus causing a great fear to come upon all who witnessed the sudden punishment of her sin.

S. Peter's work for God went on from day to day, healing the sick, instructing the ignorant, exorcising evil spirits, and so his fame became more and more noised about in the city.

The Jewish Council now interfered once more, and cast the Apostle with S. Paul into the common prison; but in the stillness of night God sent His angel to set them free, and bid them go fearlessly to the Temple and resume their labor for His glory.

When this news was carried to the members of the Sanhedrim, they were more than ever incensed against the Christian teachers, and would probably have ordered them to be immediately put to death had it not been for Gamaliel, who advised delay.

He was one of the most noted among them, for he possessed an unusual degree of learning, but though by his advice they agreed to set

S. Peter and his companion free, they were first scourged.

Soon after this event, a fierce persecution troubled the Christians, many of whom suffered a cruel death for Christ's sake, but in due time a period of rest followed, during which S. Peter visited the different churches, and among other places journeyed to Lydda.

There was a man in that city named Æneas, who for eight years had been afflicted with palsy, and S. Peter cured him, thus causing many people to believe. A woman named Tabitha dwelt in Lydda, one so kind and charitable that she was beloved of all men, and bitterly mourned when she was seized with illness and died.

Some of the Christians brought the sad news to S. Peter, and led him to the room where lay her dead body. Putting them all aside the Apostle knelt in prayer, and then turning to the lifeless form, said, "Tabitha, arise."

God, whose power is infinite, heard the

prayers of His Apostle and permitted another miracle, for at the words the woman opened her eyes, and rising up to new life filled the hearts of all who beheld her with joy and thanksgiving.

In the life of the Apostle Paul we read of the vision by which S. Peter was instructed by Heaven that the grace of God was offered to the Gentile equally with the Jew, thus preparing him to visit the dwelling of Cornelius and teach him and his assembled friends the good news of God.

So the Apostle was zealously laboring for God by word and work when Herod Agrippa ordered his imprisonment, and for the third time he was seized and cast into a dungeon, with four quaternions of soldiers to keep guard over him.

Herod doubtless feared that S. Peter might again escape his vengeance by supernatural aid, but he believed it impossible that even an angel could set him free when soldiers were employed in turns to watch him, and

two were chained to him so that his least movement might rouse them.

Meanwhile the Apostle slept as one at peace with God, although he knew that on the morrow Herod purposed his death; a sleep so soft and deep that he did not awaken to the celestial brightness of his prison until the angel smote him on the side and bade him "rise up quickly."

In a moment the chains fell off the hands of Peter, and following his heavenly guide to the prison gate—which opened to let him out without any touch of angel or of man—he was free once more.

The Apostle passed through the streets to the house of a Christian woman, where even then his friends were assembled to pray for him; great indeed was their joy when they heard that S. Peter stood at the gate seeking to come in to them.

When the day broke, Herod was told of the wonderful escape of the prisoner, and in his anger he ordered the execution of the

soldiers who had been set to guard him. But the punishment of God fell upon the wicked tyrant, and very soon a disease overtook him which caused his end.

S. Peter now undertook many journeys, and in the second year of the Emperor Claudius made his way to Rome, where he resided some years. He was then banished with the rest of the Jews by a public edict, and went to Jerusalem, but returned again to Rome about the close of the reign of Nero.

When the Apostle confounded the Magician Simon Magus, proving how he had deceived and misled the people, the Emperor's anger was such that he ordered S. Peter to be conveyed to the Mamertine prison with S. Paul.

The Christians of the great city were full of sorrow at the loss of their spiritual father and guide, and so earnestly did they implore him to effect his escape in order that he might better aid the church, that at length their prayers and tears prevailed, and S.

Peter got over the prison wall and reached the city gates unmolested.

So far he had gone when he beheld approaching him the form and face of One he had known long—even his Master. An expression of love was upon those divine features, and yet a love not unmixed with sorrow, nay, even reproach!

“Lord, whither goest Thou?” said S. Peter.

“I go to Rome to be crucified again,” was the reply, and in those words the Apostle understood that his Lord willed to suffer a second crucifixion in the person of His servant. At once Peter turned, retraced his steps to the prison, and yielded himself willingly to the hands of his jailers—willingly, too, submitted to his scourging, and suffered himself to be led to the place of execution, for he knew it was what God asked of him rather than the active service he had already given.

Crucifixion, as the most painful and the

most shameful death, was that chosen for S. Peter; but he begged as a favor that he might be placed upon the cross with his head downwards, not deeming himself worthy to suffer in the same position as the Lord he had three times denied.

The body of the Apostle was buried in the Vatican, and a small church built over his grave, but when Heliogabalus destroyed it, his remains were carried to the Appian Way until the time of Cornelius, who had them reconveyed to the Vatican, which Constantine afterwards enlarged.

In old mosaics S. Peter is represented with a scroll or book, but about the eighth century the keys were placed in his hands as a symbol of the power to absolve and the power to bind, and thus open the gates of heaven and of hell.

This great Apostle is commemorated with S. Paul upon the 29th June. There is also a festival of the Chair of S. Peter at Antioch, on account of his presidency over the Church

there, while the 1st August has for many centuries been devoted to the celebration of his miraculous deliverance from prison, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

We must, in closing our brief sketch of S. Peter's life, refer to the Epistles written by his hand for the instruction, not only of the early Christians, but for us in the present day.

When the first of these was written the Christians had been dispersed about Asia Minor by the persecuting cruelty of their enemies, and therefore much was said to console them in their afflictions and to excite them to great patience under suffering and loss.

Some two years later the second Epistle was written, only a short time before the Apostle was crucified. In it he warns the Christians against listening to false teachers, and tells them how suddenly the day of the Lord will come, even "as a thief in the night." He therefore entreats them to be

ready for that time so that they might be found "without spot and blameless," and concludes by his exhortation to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Let us take that injunction as S. Peter's charge to us, praying and striving to become daily more full of the grace and the love and the knowledge of Him whom to know is "life eternal."





S. Paul, Apostle and Martyr.

A. D. 65.



O well do we know the story of the miraculous conversion of S. Paul from an enemy to a servant of the Church of God, so familiar to us are the details of his work for souls as recorded in Holy Scripture, that it will suffice now to give but a brief mention of his life amongst those of the holy Apostles, and chiefly of the time following upon the account given in the Acts.

It would seem that immediately after his release from prison, S. Paul addressed himself with renewed zeal to his special work as the Apostle of the Gentiles, and regardless of

danger or fatigue preached in both the East and West the Gospel of Christ.

Some early historians say that not only did he journey to Spain, but to the "Isles of the Sea," by which it is understood that both Gauls and Britons may have been among those who heard the Christian faith from the lips of this great Apostle.

When S. Paul returned once more to Rome it was about the eighth or ninth year of the reign of Nero, and by the imperial command he, with S. Peter, was thrown into the Mamertine prison to await death.

As a Roman citizen it was not lawful to inflict upon the Apostle the scourging usually given to condemned criminals; but Cardinal Baronius relates that there existed in one of the churches of Rome the pillars to which both these holy servants of God were bound in preparation for this degrading punishment.

As S. Paul was led to his death he was permitted to bring about the conversion of three among the soldiers forming his guard,

who a few days later became martyrs for Christ's love. Being arrived at the appointed spot, some three miles beyond the city, the old Apostle received the stroke which ended his glorious career. An ancient tradition tells that when the Saint was beheaded, something resembling milk rather than blood poured from his veins, which fell upon the garments of his executioner, the marvel of which effected his conversion.

A church was raised by Constantine over the grave of S. Paul, and adorned with many a costly gift, but the Emperor Theodosius caused a larger and more magnificent church to be erected in its place as more honorable to so great a servant of God. Effigies of S. Paul existed in very early times, and tradition tells that he was small of stature, with a grave, sweet countenance and eyes of wonderful power and beauty—a type which is adhered to in all early pictures of the Apostle. His small size is referred to by S. Chrysostom, who calls him “a man three cubits high, yet

tall enough to reach heaven." Of that heaven he had been permitted a glimpse when he was caught up into its wonder and beauty, to describe which no earthly words sufficed. But though he might not tell what he had beheld, how often must he have mused upon it when he was weary, or troubled; how often must he have longed to "depart and be with Christ!"

So death to him was gain, though it was a death disgraceful in the eyes of his enemies — gain, for absent from the body he was indeed "present with the Lord."





S. John, Apostle and Evangelist.

A. D. 99.



HE youngest of all the Apostles was he whom we know as the "Beloved Disciple," he who was permitted to rest his head upon the Sacred Heart throbbing with love for men, and afterwards to make that Divine love his constant theme.

John was the brother of James, whom Herod Agrippa had put to death, and therefore the son of Zebedee and Salome.

From his earliest years he had doubtless heard of the time when the long-foretold Messiah should be given to Israel, and thus, when John the Baptist came to preach penance

and to prepare the way for his Master, John, afterwards the Evangelist, enrolled himself among the Saint's disciples, and was directed by him to Jesus by the words, "Behold the Lamb of God."

From that hour S. John became a follower of Christ, and his love was so deep and strong and true that he was admitted to great and particular favor by our Lord.

With S. James and S. Peter, John was suffered to be present at the miracle of the raising of the young daughter of Jairus : they too were permitted to attend their Master to the Mount of Transfiguration, and to go with Him in the first hour of His bitter Passion to the sorrowful Garden of Gethsemane.

Truly, John fled in the moment when the soldiers came to seize upon Jesus — fled because overcome by a great and sudden fear ; but love soon conquered, and he returned to the hall of judgment to be near his Lord during His trial, and with aching, agonized heart beheld the Crucifixion, and

received the last earthly wish of that beloved Master, and took the Virgin Mother to his own home.

During the remaining fifteen years of Mary's life on earth John remained with her in Jerusalem, but after she had been assumed to heaven he made his way to Asia, there to preach the Gospel of Christ and to confirm those who had already received the truth.

The churches of Pergamos, of Smyrna, of Sardis, and others, were founded by S. John; but his chief residence was at Ephesus, which church he governed.

During the reign of the Emperor Domitian a great persecution was raised against Christians, and by his order the Apostle was sent for and carried to the gate of Rome called *Latina*, where he was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil.

Doubtless S. John offered his life gladly to God in that moment; yet the will of the Almighty was not to accept him among the company of martyrs, but to prevent the fiery

bath from causing him either pain or injury, so that he came forth from it refreshed as if it had been clear pure water.

Domitian's disappointment and rage were great, and believing this miracle had been effected by the power of magic, of which men spoke and thought so much in those days, he banished the aged Apostle to the desolate isle of Patmos, in the Ægean sea.

It was a bleak and barren spot, and thus chosen by the emperors of Rome as especially suited for the residence of criminals, there being no chance of escape and no possibility of aid being rendered to them.

Away from all who could comfort him, Domitian deemed his punishment the most severe which he could inflict upon the Apostle, short of positive death; but his power could not shut heaven from the captive's sight, and God granted to S. John glorious visions of that "Jerusalem the Golden" which he mystically describes in the Apocalypse or Book of Revelations.

In this book the glory of gold and the radiance of pure gems are employed to figure to us the splendor of heaven, still even the most learned men must fail to comprehend what is reserved for us in that bright home ; we only know and love to think that there is perfect peace, perfect joy, for no sorrow and no care can enter in, neither shall there be any more sin — it will be holiness, light, love, and “ Christ all and in all.”

At length Domitian died and was succeeded by Nerva, under whose milder rule S. John was allowed to leave Patmos for Ephesus, in which city he wrote his Gospel.

This Gospel abounds not so much in narrative as in doctrine, the design and work of Christ being specially dwelt upon.

The reason for this seems to lie in the fact that certain heresies prevailed in those early days when men were beginning openly to deny the Divinity of Our Lord — an error which S. John sought to counteract. He also supplies some passages of Evangelical history

which had been omitted by the other Evangelists.

S. John was the only one of the Apostles who did not die a martyr's death — it was the will of God that he should remain a "living example of holiness unto all men," to the great age of nearly a hundred years.

Three Epistles come to us from the hand of the Beloved Disciple.

In the first of these he addresses Christians generally, telling them that in Jesus we have eternal life and fellowship with the Father, but that holiness of life must be the fruit of this faith, for "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."

He goes on to preach the forgiveness of sins, and to insist upon fraternal charity as the proof of love to God; he also warns us not to give ear to false teachers, who are not led by the spirit of God.

The second Epistle of S. John was written for the purpose of encouraging a Christian

matron with her children to walk perseveringly in the way of truth, and to avoid any dealings with those who taught not the true doctrine of Christ Jesus.

The third Epistle is addressed to one called Gaius, of whose good and charitable deeds the Apostle had heard with joy.

It seemed the especial work of S. John to teach the grand, yet simple lesson of Divine love, and that love to all men which must spring from the heart which is indeed penetrated with this love of God. "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" thus did he write for us of later times as well as for those who heard the message also from his holy lips.

Tradition tells us a beautiful story of S. John's last days on earth. Feeling that his time was short, and being so weak that he could no longer walk to the church where he had been accustomed to teach, the old Apostle entreated his friends to bear him in their arms so that he might once more speak of Christ.

They did what he desired ; but when he looked round upon the assembly his strength failed him, the words he longed to utter died upon his feeble tongue, he could only raise his trembling hands in a last blessing and falter, " Little children love one another, love one another ! "

Among the other cruelties which the Emperor Domitian practised upon the holy Apostle John, was the sending him a poisoned cup. But the Saint, taking it in his hand, made the sacred sign of the Cross, at which a serpent sprang from it, and, without doing harm to any one, glided away. This cup is preserved at Rome, in the church of S. John Lateran, as well as the tunic of the Apostle, and a piece of the chain with which he was bound on the journey from Ephesus to Rome.

A singular devotion has been entertained for S. John by many of the Saints. Among these is S. Edward the Confessor, of whom we read that he never refused anything asked in the name of the Apostle. On one occasion

S. John himself appeared in a beggar's dress beseeching alms, and the pious king, having no money with him, took the ring from his finger and gave it to the beggar.

It was returned to him afterwards by S. John with the tidings of his death upon a certain day, which prediction was fulfilled.

To both S. Briget of Sweden and S. Gertrude the Apostle appeared several times in vision, and when the last-named Saint asked God to reveal to her how she could show her love and gratitude to His beloved disciple, the answer was this :—

“If any one will say an ‘Our Father’ daily in honor of this Apostle, reminding him of the faithfulness which filled his heart when he learnt this prayer from My lips, he will surely obtain for such an one the gift of persevering in sanctifying grace to the end of his life.”

There is an oft-told legend of S. John's life which we cannot omit here, because it

shows so clearly his love for souls and his tenderness to sinners.

After his sojourn at Patmos, the Apostle met in a certain city with a youth whom he persuaded to begin to walk in the way of eternal life. Being compelled to go elsewhere, S. John entrusted this youth to the care of the Bishop, calling upon Our Lord to witness his charge solemnly given in the church of the city.

The Bishop promised to guide and watch over the young man, and did indeed baptize him and instruct him carefully in Christian doctrine ; but he allowed him to go from his care too soon, so that, borne down by strong temptation, he fell into many and grievous sins.

One night he went with his bad companions to take part in a highway robbery, and the desire for gain took such hold of his mind that he became one of the chief robbers and assassins in those parts.

Time passed and S. John returning to the

city sought the Bishop and said : "Give me back him whom I committed to your charge in the presence of Christ Jesus."

"He is dead," said the Bishop. "Dead to God, for he has become a robber upon the highway."

The Apostle's heart was pierced with grief at such tidings, and calling for a horse he rode quickly towards the mountain where his pupil was then known to dwell. The robbers, however, employed sentinels to guard the mountain passes, and these seized upon S. John and carried him before their leader.

He — the once promising youth — recognized his spiritual Father, and, for very shame, turned and fled.

But the old Apostle would not thus let him go, and following him cried : "Why art thou flying from thy Father? stay, my son, for Jesus has sent me to you."

The young robber paused at these words, sorrow now succeeded to shame, and he began to weep bitterly ; yet he would not

stretch out his hand, defiled as it was with crime, to touch the Saint.

But he — the Saint of love — took that sinful hand and touched it with his lips, then he led away the youth to the church, nor was it long before his soul was restored to life, and he regained all the grace he had lost. Thus did John love sinners, because great, and deep, and burning was his love for Him who died for sinners, and who came into the world to seek and to save the lost.





S. Stephen, Deacon and Proto-Martyr.

A. D. 33.



THE name of Stephen signifies *a crown*, and a glorious crown in heaven was surely won by him who was chosen of God to lay down his life for Christ's love, first of all the many martyrs.

S. Stephen was one of six other Jewish men who had been elected to the office of deacon by reason of their well-known piety and wisdom. This office was constituted in the early Church for the purpose of having proper care taken of the poor, and Stephen with his companions were admitted to it by the laying on of hands, and we hear that he

was "full of faith and power, and did great wonders and miracles among the people."

But certain men began to feel great enmity against the holy deacon, and, resolving to do him harm, they bribed false witnesses to declare that he had been heard publicly to utter blasphemy against Moses, and also against the Almighty.

S. Stephen was therefore summoned to appear before the council or Sanhedrim upon the charge of saying that Jesus, the crucified and rejected Nazarene, should destroy Jerusalem and change all the rites which had been celebrated by the command of Moses.

We hear that as the holy deacon stood before the assembly, his face shone as that of an angel, bright with the love of God, and the thought of the dear Master, who also had been evil spoken of and dragged before an earthly tribunal.

He made a long address to the council with such power and courage, that they were "cut to the heart at his words," yet gnashed with

their teeth in their passionate anger against the Saint, who, looking upwards, cried : " Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. "

We read that at these words the infuriated people stopped their ears, and with one accord fell upon their victim, casting him violently outside the gates of the city that he might be stoned to death.

Heavily upon the martyr's head fell the stones, terribly they cut and bruised him ; but he called upon his Master for help, saying : " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. "

But Jesus had done more than suffer — He had prayed for His murderers ; and Stephen, who was treading the hard, rough, blood-stained way of the Cross, must also pray for those who were taking his life.

" Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, " he cried, and thus speaking he " fell asleep, " the sweet sleep of holy death, a martyr's death, which should know such a blissful awakening.

Oh, happy Saint, so soon to follow his crucified Lord! may we learn from him to love our enemies and to pray for our persecutors, and thus grasp the lesson of his holy life.





S. Mary Magdalen.

A. D. 68.



IN studying the history of God's most favored servants, we find them divided into two classes; those who, by God's grace, have been preserved in wonderful purity of heart and life, and those who, by that same divine grace, are brought from spiritual darkness to light, from sin to sanctity.

Among these last we find Mary Magdalen, the once notorious sinner, who became the most illustrious of all holy women, the Virgin Mother alone excepted.

Her story begins upon the day when Christ sat at meat in the house of the Pharisee, and Magdalen, hearing that he was there, went to Him.

Though a sinner, she knows that Jesus is God, and she has resolved to approach Him. Silently she enters, and falling down before the gentle Saviour, began to wash those sacred feet with her tears and to wipe them with her long hair.

An alabaster vase is in her hand full of costly ointment, and opening it she anoints the Lord, not indeed his head—according to the custom of the East—but kneeling, she pours the perfumed oil upon the feet already bathed with tears of penitence and love.

She has not spoken, she has not told out the burden of her sin and shame, for Jesus knows it all, and knows too her deep penitence and love, and so in that brief moment she is forgiven, and the sinner is transformed into the saint.

The Pharisee is displeased with the scene

which has taken place, and Christ reading his heart says, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," and thereupon follows the passage which has encouraged many a penitent sinner since that day, wherein Jesus declares that "Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much."

It was by Mary Magdalen's conversion that Our Lord seems to have become a friend and a guest in the house of Lazarus and Martha; so loving and so tender a friend that He wept for the grief of these sisters when their brother died, wept tears of human sympathy which Scripture has recorded that we may understand something of what it is to possess the friendship of Jesus.

We see Christ a guest in the home of Bethany, Martha busy in serving, Mary sitting at His feet listening to the words which fell from His lips. Martha complained and said, "Lord, hast thou no care that my sister hath left me alone to serve? speak to her therefore that she help me."

Both sisters loved Our Lord, though the expression of that love was different; the active service was accepted and prized, yet Jesus declares that "Mary hath chosen the better part," the silent waiting at His feet.

Time passed, and the hour drew nigh when the Son of man should sacrifice His life upon the Cross, and once more he comes to Bethany, the place where Lazarus had been raised from the dead.

A supper was prepared for Christ there in the house of Simon the leper, and Martha served, while Lazarus was of those who sat at the table with the Master.

Again Mary Magdalen enters with an alabaster vase, as once before she had come in penitence and shame; but now she is the friend of Jesus she may dare to pour the ointment upon the Sacred Head; then — with perhaps a sudden remembrance of her former guilt — she cast herself at Christ's feet, anointing them with what remains, and "wiping them with the hair of her head."

The disciples are displeased at this homage ; it is a waste they think, for the costly spike-nard might have been well sold and its price given to the poor.

But Jesus reproved them. He knew why Magdalen had done this. He could read all the love and longing of her heart, and He answers, " she hath done what she could," and adds that, " Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her."

The terrible agony was over, the cruel scourging had been endured, the crown of thorns had been wreathed around the head of Jesus the man of sorrows. He had borne the burden of His heavy Cross up the steep mountain-side, and now he hangs there bleeding and dying.

Are His friends near, His disciples pressing close, they whom His touch had healed of their diseases, whose dead He had given back to them? Ah, no ! Only a few loving, faith-

ful women with the Apostle John — Mary the stainless mother, the Immaculate Virgin, by the side of penitent, loving Magdalen at the foot of the Cross.

The three hours of agony went by, the sacrifice was accomplished, and the bruised, nail-pierced body had been wound in linen cloths and embalmed with fragrant aromatic spices after the custom of the Jews, and now it was lying in the garden sepulchre until the resurrection morning.

We see Mary Magdalen hurrying there — so early that it is yet dark — to watch and pray ; but the stone has been rolled away, the sepulchre is open, and in grief she runs to tell SS. Peter and John, " They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre and we know not where they have laid Him."

Yes, it was indeed true that he was not there, the disciples come and look for themselves, and then go away to their own homes.

Only Mary Magdalen remains to weep by

the empty tomb, to tell her grief to the white-robed angels, and to one other who is not far off, and whom she thinks must be the gardener.

"They have taken away my Lord," she cries. Ah, well may she weep if she thinks that Jesus is lost to her, well may we weep if by our own unfaithfulness, our cold neglect, our sin, He seems lost to us !

"Mary." No other voice could ever be like His, and turning, she sees Him whom she loves so much and calls by the dear name of "Master."

Perhaps it was in her heart to press her lips again upon those pierced feet ; but Jesus says : "Do not touch me." Is His love less than in past days, the days when she came to anoint Him with precious ointment, when she sat so near and listened to the words of Him "Who spake as never man spake?" No ; it is because Jesus is no more what he had been ; His body was transfigured now into a higher life, soon he

would be at the right hand of the Father, and Magdalen must wait till she may fall at His feet in heaven.

There is no further mention of this penitent, loving woman in Holy Scripture ; but tradition and early history give us the closing part of her life.

Years had rolled on ; S. Peter had been crucified at Rome, the Virgin Mother had gone to heaven after her patient waiting, and Lazarus, with his sisters, passed to the shores of France. Tradition tells that a boat containing the family of Bethany left the beautiful coast of Palestine, and by some unseen power was guided to Marseilles, where a little congregation of Christians soon gathered around those who could tell the story of Jesus of Nazareth, as the story of a dear and well-known friend.

Of Magdalen there is but one remembrance at this port, in the altar bearing her name, which is in the vaults of the abbey of S. Victor. At Aix there was an oratory where it

is said she had prayed in the company of S. Maximus, who had accompanied her pilgrimage; but it was in greater retirement that God had chosen the life of His servant to end. There was a lonely desert in that part, and a cave in which the Saint should hold wondrous communications with Him she had loved so deeply, and the same impulse which had guided her once to the house of the Pharisee, led her to this retreat. For thirty years her life was one of mingled prayer and penance; many times in each day she was carried by unseemly angels from her cave to the rock above it, where visions were granted her which the tongue may not tell, nor the pen describe.

So the hour approached which Magdalen must long have desired, she knew she was about to pass from brief glimpses of untold glory to that which should be eternal, and she longed once more to receive the Blessed Sacrament of love. Not far removed was the oratory of S. Maximus, and when Mary

Magdalen knew the hour had come, she was carried by angels to a spot where the holy Bishop had been divinely inspired to wait for her, and where he gave her the holy communion of the Lord's Body and Blood. Then he placed her remains in an alabaster monument, and prepared a grave for himself close by.

At the commencement of the eighth century the Saracens invaded Provence, and thus it was that in fear the monks of S. Cassian, who were dwelling in that part, concealed the crypt in which the relics of S. Mary Magdalen reposed by a heap of sand and rubbish. They even removed her body from the alabaster tomb to another grave ; but they placed two inscriptions in it which should show in some future day what it truly was.

Centuries passed away ; the precise spot where the dear Saint lay was forgotten, and strange rumors concerning the removal of her remains went about. At length God inspired the Prince of Salerno to make a

pilgrimage for the purpose of discovering the sepulchre of Magdalen, so beloved of Christ, and in the December of 1279 a trench was opened in the old basilica of S. Cassian. Soon the workmen struck on the stone of a grave, and when the prince had it raised, a sweet fragrance was immediately perceived by all; then, convinced that his search was rewarded, he caused the sepulchre to be sealed until the Bishops of Provence might be convoked.

In the following spring a vast multitude stood near the tomb of Mary Magdalen, when with all honor it was opened, and the eyes of ecclesiastics, of princes, of men, women, and little children were permitted to see and venerate the bones which had bent in loving adoration at the feet of Jesus. Upon the forehead a small particle of flesh was observed to be transparent, and with one accord the assembly declared their belief that it was the spot once touched by the finger of the Saviour

when He said to Magdalen, "Noli me tangere."

Upon the ground where for thirteen hundred years these sacred relics had lain undisturbed, a church was erected by Charles II. of Sicily, but only completely finished by his successors two centuries later.

Beautiful is the story of Mary Magdalen — the story of mingled penitence and love. Sinful, she had nothing to offer Jesus but her tears; pardoned, she had only her love to give Him.

But what love it was! so deep, so strong, so abiding; a love which kept her ever following in the footsteps of Him who had pardoned her so much, even when His path led to the Cross and to the grave.

We too have deeply sinned, but alas! our penitence is not that of Magdalen; we have not shed such tears as she did, we do not perhaps feel the same unwavering confidence in the forgiveness of Our Lord.

Oh, pray for us, dear Saint, that we may

feel a contrition such as thine, for the many sins of our lives ; pray for us, too, that rising pardoned from the feet of Christ we may never more turn back from loving and following Him.





S. Jerome.

A. D. 420.

IN a small town upon the confines of Italy and Stridonium S. Jerome was born, in the year 342.

Not being baptized he fell into many snares during his residence at Rome, while pursuing his education; yet even then he had an intense desire after spiritual things, and on Sundays would visit the Catacombs, thinking much of the holy Apostles and glorious martyrs whose bodies rested there. After a time he journeyed to Treves, and, during his stay there his heart turned to God, and resolving to serve Him only, he at once renounced all worldly pleasures and affections,

binding himself by a vow to the Almighty. Being baptized, Jerome went to a monastery at Aquileia, until the year 373, when, with three companions, he started on a pilgrimage to those sacred places where Our Lord's sufferings were endured.

His next retreat was to the desert of Chalcida, lying between Syria and Arabia, where for four years he labored with his hands for his own support ; and as one of his friends went home, and the other two died, he was left completely alone.

It was there that the remembrance of past sin became very bitter, so bitter that he was almost tempted to despair of God's mercy until peace was given to his soul, to which this interior desolation had been permitted, as a means of purification.

As a penance for so much self-indulgence and wasted time in early youth, he set himself to the study of Hebrew, which became a great help to him afterwards.

At Antioch S. Jerome was ordained a

priest, but so unworthy did he consider himself that it was long before he could be induced to take up the duties of his sacred office.

In the year 380 he went to study under S. Gregory Nazianzen, at Constantinople, and then passed on to Rome, where he undertook to instruct some of those Christian women who had specially devoted themselves to the service of God. In 385 S. Jerome went back to Palestine, where he devoted himself to teach children, and live under a most austere rule of life.

About a year afterwards S. Paula, with her daughter Eustochium, who had been instructed by the Saint, among the other Christian women in the city of Rome, went to Bethlehem, and there founded two monasteries, one for herself and the nuns who joined her, and the other for S. Jerome and his brethren.

It is told us of the holy man that whatever his occupation might be, whether teaching

others or engaged in sacred writing, or only taking necessary food, he had always certain words ringing in his ears, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment;" and thus he may indeed be numbered among those blessed ones whom the Lord finds watching and waiting for His coming. The circumstances of S. Jerome's death are not known, but we are sure that it would be the passage to eternal rest. Many were his writings, but chief of all is the translation of the Scriptures into Latin. In learning he is considered to surpass nearly all the ancient Fathers of the Church, and to be a great authority upon all points of doctrine.

The holy S. Paula died before him, and, in speaking of her departure, S. Jerome says: "As if she were going to her beloved friends, and was about to leave strangers, she murmured, 'Lord, I have loved the habitations of Thy House, and the place of the habitation of Thy glory,' and so breathed out her soul, making the sign of the Cross upon her lips."



S. Leo the Great.

A. D. 461.



LEO — surnamed the Great — was born in the city of Rome, though descended from a noble Tuscan family. He evinced great talent and ability even in childhood, and made rapid progress in his education. As he grew older he gave himself chiefly to the study of theology and the Holy Scriptures, and was then made arch-deacon under Pope Celestine.

When, in 440, Pope Sixtus died, Leo was chosen to fill his place, being considered eminently suited for that position by reason of his sanctity and learning. During the forty

days which elapsed before he could arrive at Rome he was expected with the greatest impatience, and on the day of his episcopal consecration there were great public rejoicings. But S. Leo himself was full of fear at his exaltation, knowing that dignity and power often lead the soul from God, and thus he prayed: "Lord, I have heard Thy voice calling me, and I was afraid; I considered the work which was enjoined me, and I trembled. For what proportion is there between the burden assigned me and my weakness, this elevation and my nothingness? O Thou who hast laid upon me this heavy burden, bear it with me, be my guide and my support."

With such dispositions, we may be sure God's grace was abundantly poured out upon S. Leo, enabling him to rule the Church wisely in those times of difficulty. Many errors and even vices existed in the Church, but with resolute gentleness he set himself to root them out, inculcating holy precepts both

by his life and his teaching. Ninety-six of the sermons preached by this holy Pontiff have been preserved, and are full of wise and holy counsels.

When Carthage was taken by the Vandals, in the year 439, a large number of the heretic Manichees fled to Rome, and there feigned to be Catholics; but S. Leo found them out, and was enabled to induce many to give up their heresy, while he caused those who were obstinate to be banished from the city. The heresy of Eutychus now gave the holy Pontiff much trouble in the churches of the East, and at the same time the western empire was invaded by Attila, one of the most powerful barbarian kings. When it was known that he was marching towards Rome, S. Leo went out to meet him, and, contrary to all expectations, was received by him with great honor, and managed to get a treaty of peace concluded with the empire.

It was after this that the Vandals entered and plundered the city, and bore away many

captives to Africa, where S. Leo sent alms for their relief and many zealous priests to instruct and encourage them. For rather more than twenty-one years this great Pontiff ruled the Church, beloved by all ranks and conditions of men, and then, upon the 10th November, 461, he died, his body being interred in the church of S. Peter. It was afterwards translated to another place in the same church, and the name of S. Leo placed among the names of the many Saints whose intercession we may implore in all times of our need.





S. Brigid.

A. D. 523.

IN the land to which S. Patrick brought God's truth a child was born, about the year 453, whom we venerate now as Brigid, the sainted virgin and abbess of the Church.

Her parents were Christians and of noble family, and the little maiden early showed signs of piety, and was remarkable for her purity of heart and her charity to others. It was her happiness to listen sometimes to the teaching of Patrick, and the lessons thus learned ran pleasantly in her mind as she went about the simple duties of her daily life.

In those days women high in rank were wont to milk the cows and churn the butter, so Brigid, at her mother's bidding, must work with the rest and complete a certain task at some appointed hour.

One day as she was busy at the churn, she thought so much of the poor—God's dearly loved poor—that she gave her butter when made to some needy creature who came that way, and returned to her mother with an empty jar.

She began to fear the displeasure of Brocessa, which in the moment of desire to help a fellow-creature had been forgotten, so with all her heart she prayed Almighty God to help and deliver her.

It was not in vain. Rather than leave the simple believing prayer unanswered, God must work a miracle, and thus Brigid's jar was filled on the instant with sweet, pure butter, which weighed more than any of the rest.

As the little maiden grew to womanhood, it

was the desire of her parents to marry her suitably, but Brigid had consecrated herself to God, and to Him she turned in her difficulty, begging that she might lose the beauty which rendered her pleasing to the eyes of men.

Again she was answered, for immediately one eye began to swell so terribly that it burst in her head, and a messenger then waiting to carry back an answer to one of her rich suitors, took back instead the tidings that the once lovely Brigid was a spectacle most terrible and repulsive to behold.

She suffered agony, but her heart was full of joy, for her parents now cheerfully consented to her taking the religious habit, and applying to the Bishop Maceleus, Brigid received from him the white tunic and veil she had so much desired.

Our divine Lord was pleased to show the favor with which He regarded His servant by restoring her face to its former beauty at the moment she pronounced her vows, and further by permitting that the wooden support

of the altar, on which her hand rested as she bent forward to receive the veil, should at that moment become fresh and verdant, and afterwards be the means of many miraculous cures.

Seven or eight other maidens seem to have entered the religious state with the holy Brigid, but many more were added to the little sisterhood over whom she ruled by command of the Bishop.

So quickly did her reputation increase that women of all ages flocked to her, begging for admission, and it became necessary to open convents in different parts of Ireland for their reception.

About the year 480 the people of Leinster entreated Brigid to come and dwell among them, and she agreed to their wish. In their grateful joy they gave to her a piece of land, on which she built her convent under shadow of a magnificent oak, which continued to flourish long centuries after the holy nun had passed to her reward.

It was God's Will to perform many miraculous signs of His favor toward S. Brigid.

Upon a certain day she was entertaining a guest, by whom she observed, as it seemed, the devil sitting.

"I would that I too could see him," cried the lady, when she was told of it.

"We must first sign your eyes with the sign of the Cross," said S. Brigid; "otherwise you could not bear the sight of your terrible enemy."

No sooner had the sacred sign been made upon the eyelids of the lady than she beheld the Evil One, black and terrible, with a head of large size, and breathing out fire from his mouth and nostrils.

S. Brigid commanded him to speak, and to her he said that he dwelt with that maiden and had part with her by reason of her slothfulness.

"See," said the Saint; "this is the acquaintance you have been for so many years

cultivating." And alarmed and warned, the maiden struggled to overcome her besetting sin, and was thus delivered from the power of the Evil One.

Near her convent at Kildare S. Brigid was once walking with some of her spiritual daughters, when she observed a young man hurrying along with a speed and appearance altogether unsuited for one whom she knew was in training for the office of priest.

The good nun believed that his levity of manner was harmful to himself and others, therefore she sought to give him a lesson without offending charity.

"Whither are you running in such haste?" she asked as he approached her, and in jest he answered that he was "running to the Kingdom of Heaven."

"I would that I, my brother, were worthy to run along with you to-day to that kingdom," replied the Saint. "Pray for me that I may one day arrive there."

The reproof sank deeply into the heart of

the young man ; he felt so conscious of his faults that he began a life of true penance and holiness. That day S. Brigid told him that it should be his office to bring her the Body and Blood of her Lord at the hour of her death ; and the prophecy was fulfilled, for he, once so careless, but afterwards known by the name of Nennidh, the clean-handed, stood by the side of the departing Saint bearing the most holy Viaticum, when, after her seventy years of life were ended, she was received into the presence of the Queen of Saints in glory everlasting.





S. David.

A. D. 544.



THE birth of S. David had been foretold more than thirty years by Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland, when he was passing through Wales, for an angel had revealed to him that a saint would be given to that country, who should greatly glorify God.

So in the year 462 the child was born, of whom such future holiness had been predicted, and he was grandson to the king of the province which in the present day is called Cardigan. The childhood and early youth of S. David were spent in the care of his mother, after which he went to the Isle of Wight, then known as Vectis, that he might

receive the instruction of S. Paulinus, who dwelt there in great retirement.

At length S. David went back to his own country and erected a monastery, where he soon was successful in gathering together a community to practise a simple rule much the same as that which was followed by S. Anthony and the monks of Egypt. A Pagan chief who dwelt near did all in his power to disturb and trouble them, but was unsuccessful in sending them away as he had hoped. These brethren were dependent on their own exertions for their maintenance, which they earned by rural labor, but a certain time was set apart each day for prayer and holy meditation, and in the evening when a bell rang, they gave up work and went to the church where they remained till nightfall. At the crowing of the cock they rose and repaired to the church till the dawn of day called them to their labor again, and thus simply and peacefully their days were passed in obedience and humility.

There existed at that time the Pelagian heresy, which had been introduced by Pelagius, a native of Wales, and which denied the existence of original sin. S. David set himself to battle against this dangerous doctrine, and by his eloquence was able to silence many heretics, and sometimes to convince them of their error.

A synod was held in Cardiganshire, to which S. David was invited, and at its close the Archbishop of Caerleon resigned his own See to the Saint of Wales, who would have refused it, but for the express commands laid upon him. But it was arranged that the See should be transferred from Caerleon to Menevia—now called S. David's—which was a quiet and retired spot, more suited to one who loved not the haunts of men.

The Saint very frequently passed over to Ireland, and many of his monks went there also from their own monastery. There is some uncertainty as to the age at which S. David died; some affirm that he lived to the

age of eighty-two years ; others—but these are not so many—affirming that he was one hundred and forty-six. It is told of him that, on the last Sunday of his holy and useful life, he preached to his people with much earnestness, and also gave a special exhortation to his clergy to be faithful shepherds of the flock of Christ. Feeling his end approaching, he received the Holy Eucharist to strengthen him in his agony, and then he seemed to see in vision the Lord Jesus coming to him. With tears of joy, and outstretched hands, the holy man welcomed the heavenly guest, who, after a while, turned as if to go ; then, with inexpressible love and longing, S. David cried, “ Lord, take me after Thee ; ” and as he spoke the words his desire was given him, and his spirit was set free from earth, and entered into the glory of the eternal world.



S. Columba.

A. D. 597.

IN one of the wildest districts of Donegal, many a century back, a lady of royal descent was expecting the birth of a child, who, if a son, would probably succeed to the throne of Ireland, which his ancestors had held for six hundred years.

One night, in a dream, an angel appeared to this woman, bringing her a veil covered with flowers of rarest beauty; but as she gazed, the veil was lifted by the wind and carried away over plains and mountains, so that she saw it no more. Then said the angel to her:—

“Thou art about to become the mother of

a son who shall lead innumerable souls to the heavenly country, and be reckoned among the prophets of God.”

Soon afterwards the child was born, and was baptized Columba, and the priest who had thus made him an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, took charge of his education as he grew older. Very early did the youth feel called to the monastic life, and devoted himself assiduously to the necessary study. But manual toil was in those days required from all who aspired to the religious habit, and Columba, though of royal birth, must, like his young companions, grind the corn for the next day's food, and other humble offices which were commanded in the monastic school where he was trained for the life he desired.

While still but a very young man, Columba founded some considerable number of monastic houses in Ireland, one of which was Derry, in his own native province, where he habitually lived and superintended the commu-

nity. The monk was also a poet, writing some of his verses in Latin, but more in his own tongue, some few of which have been preserved.

Columba loved books, which were then rare indeed, and we hear that with his own hand he transcribed three hundred copies of the Gospels and of the Psalter. After a time this Saint resolved to exile himself from his dearly-loved island as a reparation for his many sins, and departed with twelve companions in an osier-boat covered with hide, that he might preach the Gospel to the heathen. The spot where he landed took the name of I. Colmkill—the islands of Columb of the Churches—but is more familiar to us as Iona. A legendary story tells that Columba really set foot first upon another islet, but finding that from it he could still see his dear Ireland, he immediately got into his boat to seek a shore from whence no glimpse of his native country could be obtained. Reaching Iona, he mounted its highest point, and as Ireland

was quite invisible, there he remained and built huts of branches, for himself and his brethren.

If Columba was sad at heart in his exile, he did not allow that sadness to interfere with the work he had undertaken, and so powerfully did he preach Christ to those around that the wild and savage became docile as children, and the most hardened sinners were brought to shed tears of repentance. From Ireland, from all parts of Britain, from among the still-heathen Saxons, people flocked to visit the saintly Columba, who received them with such unwearied charity; but he found time for labor with other monks, for penance, and for prolonged prayer.

Many who came to Iona desired to remain there to follow the same rule of life, so the little community rapidly increased, and from it other monasteries were founded, all of which were subject to the rule of Columba.

But the heart of the Saint was turning to that part of Caledonia where dwelt the Picts,

who were still heathens, and the last thirty years of his life were spent in missions to them. On one of these journeys on the banks of Loch Ness, he said to his companions:—

“Let us make haste and meet the angels, who have come down from heaven, and who wait for us by a Pict, who, according to the natural law, has done well all his life to extreme old age. We must baptize him before he dies.”

Himself then old, Columba hastened on, outstripping the pace of his disciples, and reached a secluded valley, where he found an aged man who listened to his teachings, received baptism, and immediately resigned his soul into God’s keeping.

In the eastern part of Caledonia there was a chieftain who had refused the missionaries permission to settle there; but when his son became ill he hastened to them; beseeching their prayers for his apparently dying child, and offering them land for the foundation of a religious house. At the prayer of Columba

the boy's life was spared, and when the Saint had settled his disciples in their new home, he bade them farewell. One of them, named Drostan, was so grieved at the separation from his master, that he wept violently, whereupon Columba said: "Let us call this place the Monastery of Tears." And the great abbey retained that name during the thousand years which it stood upon that spot.

Towards the latter part of his life Columba found it necessary to make several journeys to Ireland, for the visitation of monasteries he had founded there; but though he labored hard in serving God, and bore many a fatigue in helping others for His sake, such was his humility that he felt he had done nothing worthy of so dear a Master. As he noticed that his life was drawing to a close the Saint increased his mortifications and austerities.

One day he saw a poor old woman gathering herbs, and even nettles for her food, whereupon he was filled with self-reproach because he was better fed than she. So the

old Saint went home to his monastery, and gave orders that he also should be served with wild herbs and nettles, and he was much displeased when the monk Diarmid threw a little butter into the cauldron wherein this miserable food was prepared.

It seemed as if it was God's will to make known the future glory of Columba, by permitting a heavenly radiance to surround him in his time of prayer; his monks could see his cell brilliantly lighted during the night while their master sang God's praises, and it was a light which dazzled them with its exceeding brightness.

One winter's night a young man remained alone in the church while the others were resting, and all at once he saw the holy old Abbot enter, and a golden radiance seemed to come from the roof and light up the entire building. These signs were observed for several years before the death of Columba; but at length one day he was found gazing heavenward with a wonderful joy glowing upon every feature,

which presently gave place to a look of deep sadness. Two of his monks knelt at his feet, and implored him to say what had been revealed to him, and then he told that it was thirty years that day since he had landed in Caledonia, and that he had always prayed that his time on earth might end with those thirty years. But then he added, "When you saw me so joyous, I was already able to see the angels coming for me, but suddenly they stopped upon that rock beyond our island, as if they could not approach me; and thus I am sad, for I know that the prayers of many are obtaining from God that I should still dwell in the body."

Four years more passed by, and now the holy man again spoke of his death. It was the end of May, and he desired to take leave of some of the monks who were at work in the fields on the western side of Iona; but as he could not walk by reason of weakness, he was drawn in a cart by some oxen. When he reached the desired spot he told his brethren

that he had hoped to die during the festival of Easter, but had prayed to linger until it was over, lest his departure might change that time of rejoicing into sadness. Then he blessed the island and its inhabitants, and returned to the monastery; but on the following Saturday he told Diarmid that it was his last day on earth. We hear that as he spoke an old white horse, which had daily carried milk to the monastery, came and put its head on his shoulder, as if bidding his master farewell.

"Leave him with me," said Columba, when Diarmid would have driven the faithful creature away; "God hath revealed to this poor animal what He has hidden from thee: he loves me, so let him weep for my departure."

After this, the Saint went to his cell, and set himself to the work he was then engaged upon, in transcribing the *Psalter*. At the thirty-third Psalm he stayed his hand, saying, "Baithru will write the rest." Then he went

to Office, after which he sat down on the stone floor of his cell, and entrusted one of his disciples with a last message of love to the community. As the bell rang for matins, Columba hastened first of them all, to the church, and knelt down before the altar, and there—when the lights were brought—the monks found him dying. Once he opened his eyes, full of a most joyful peace; once, too, he tried to raise his hand in blessing, but even as he made the attempt he drew his last breath, and fell as it were asleep—but it was the sleep which knows no earthly waking, for Columba was now at rest forever.





S. Thomas Aquinas.

A. D. 1274.



HE last words which this great Saint spoke to those around his bed seem to give us the secret of his life of singular holiness and fidelity from its earliest commencement to its close : "Be assured that he who shall always walk faithfully in God's presence, always ready to give Him an account of all his actions, shall never be separated from Him by consenting to sin."

In that constant recollection had S. Thomas been dwelling from the day when, as a little child of five years, he was placed under the monks of Monte Cassino ; and they saw with surprise and joy that the impatience, anger,

and other ordinary faults of children had no place in him, that God's grace seemed to fill his heart, and that his natural talent was even surpassed by his disposition towards piety and virtue.

Of illustrious family, his parents desired that he should prize nobility of birth far less than holiness of life, and thus they placed him with those who should best instil the love and knowledge of God into his heart.

When S. Thomas was ten years old the Abbot of Monte Cassino advised his father to send him for further study to some university, but first of all the Count took him to stay awhile with his mother at their home near Loretto.

Here the boy was both the wonder and the admiration of the household, for though there was much company, and his life was so different to what he had been accustomed, he seemed as recollected as if he were still dwelling in the monastery, speaking as little as possible, and spending his time in prayer or

serious reading. It was his happiness too to seek out the poor and needy, and give them help ; for this purpose he distributed his own meals among the hungry, until his father heard of it and allowed him to dispense alms at the gate to all who applied for aid, which permission caused Thomas the greatest joy. The Countess, seeing how pure and innocent was the mind of her little son, feared the risk of placing him in a college lest he might be led astray by evil influence, but her husband was resolved on sending him to Naples, where a university had lately been opened. In the midst of danger this holy child seems to have kept himself spotless, shunning all whom he perceived were not virtuous, and praying earnestly to God to preserve him from evil. As he grew up towards manhood he shunned those amusements which so frequently harm the soul, and spent his leisure in the quiet of his chamber, praying and meditating on holy things. His chief friend was a very holy priest of the Order of

S. Dominic, and his words so inflamed the heart of S. Thomas with an increasing love for God that he conceived a desire to give himself wholly to the Divine service in that Order.

When the Count, his father, was told of this desire, he refused to agree to it, but the Saint being assured that it was God's call, knew that it must be obeyed, even before the voice of an earthly parent, and therefore at his earnest entreaty he received the Dominican habit at Naples, in 1243, when he was about seventeen years old.

The Countess Theodora sent a messenger to urge him to give up such a state of life, and set out to visit him for the same purpose, whereupon S. Thomas begged his Superiors to remove him. They did so, sending him first to Rome, and afterwards to Paris; but two of his brothers, who were commanders in the enemy's guard, seized him on the road near Acqua-pendente, and after striving vainly to pull off his habit, took him to Rocca-Sec-

ca, the seat of his father. The Countess now used persuasions and tears to turn her son from his desire for the life of a religious, but he remained firm and unshaken, so that growing angry, she ordered him to be closely confined, and allowed him to see no one but his two sisters.

This solitude was very welcome to the Saint, for it gave him time for prayer; but it was interrupted by the arrival of his brothers, who shut him up in a tower of the castle, tore his habit into shreds, and even sent a wicked person to him to try and tempt him to sin. Snatching up a burning brand from the fire, S. Thomas drove this creature from his presence, and then kneeling in prayer thanked God for helping him, and begged grace ever to remain faithful to his vow of entire purity and self-consecration. It was then that, falling into a sleep, he was visited by two angels, who seemed to gird him so tightly round the waist with a cord that the pressure awoke him; but this favor from Heaven he

carefully concealed for some thirty years, and then, in telling it to his confessor, added that from that time he had never felt tempted by any impure thought or imagination.

For a year or more S. Thomas suffered this cruelty at the hands of his friends, and then they began to relent, seeing his great patience.

The Dominicans of Naples being told that his mother was willing to help her holy son to escape, went to Rocca-Secca, where Thomas was let down from the tower in a strong basket, and so accompanied them back to his brethren, who received him joyfully.

A year from this time he made his profession there ; but his mother renewed her complaints to Pope Innocent IV., and he sent for S. Thomas, in order to examine him as to whether his was a true vocation, and, finding every sign that God had called him to His immediate service, the disputed question was set at rest by the Pope's entire approbation.

S. Thomas now went from Rome to Paris,

and afterwards to Cologne, where he continued his studies, but so concealing his progress and his talents, through motives of humility, that his companions mockingly called him "the dumb ox." However, his brilliant powers of intellect could not long remain undiscovered, especially by his masters; but applause and admiration had no ill-effect upon S. Thomas, who was already so well-grounded in the virtue of humility. One day when it was his business to read at table the corrector by mistake told him to read a word wrongly, and S. Thomas obeyed, though he was aware of the error. When others spoke of it, and said he had been foolish to admit the correction, the Saint answered: "It matters not how a word is pronounced, but to practise on all occasions humility and obedience is of the greatest importance."

In the year 1248 S. Thomas was appointed to teach at Cologne, and he then commenced publishing his first work. It was then, also, that he began with increased prayer and holy

mortification to prepare himself for the priesthood.

The devotion of S. Thomas to the Blessed Sacrament was of no ordinary kind ; long did he kneel before it in the day, long hours also were given in prayer in that Divine Presence during the hours of the night, and the love there enkindled shone in his every look and word.

In October, 1257, the Saint was made Doctor of Divinity, and a year later was called upon to give his judgment in a question of great importance, about which the opinion of the professors of the Paris University was divided. Before giving utterance to any decision, the young doctor applied himself to prayer, and then writing his treatise carried it to the church, and laying it upon the altar offered it thus to God.

S. Louis, the holy King of France, had a deep respect for S. Thomas, and frequently sought his counsel even in matters concerning the state.

In 1261 Pope Urban IV. summoned the Saint to Rome, where he taught and preached, as he also did in Naples, Bologna, Viterbo, and many other cities. There were two Rabbins of the Jewish church who had held a lengthy conference with S. Thomas, and remained obstinate in their unbelief, but agreed to resume the discussion upon the coming day.

After leaving them, the Saint repaired to the foot of the altar, and there prayed during the entire night for their conversion; and in the morning the Rabbins sought him, begging to be baptized Christians, while many others followed their example.

In the year 1263 the general chapter of the Dominicans was held in London, and S. Thomas being present, soon afterwards obtained permission to relinquish his teaching, and thus be more able to live a retired life.

Many ecclesiastical preferments were offered him, but never could he be prevailed on to accept of any.

For several months before his death S.

Thomas laid aside his writings, and fixed his whole mind on God and thoughts of the life to come.

A general council had been convoked by Pope Gregory X., and having been directed to repair to it the Saint set out for Naples, though very much out of health.

This was at the close of the month of January, in 1274, and he had for his companion his friend, Father Reynold of Piperno. On his way S. Thomas rested at the Castle of Magenza, the residence of his niece; but here his illness increased, and he felt sure that his end was not far distant.

However this conviction in nowise hindered him from continuing his journey until an increase of fever compelled him to stop at the Cistercian Abbey of Fossa-Nuova. Here he went at once before the Blessed Sacrament, and began to pray with great fervor; and passing thence into the cloister he was lodged in the Abbot's cell, and lay there for nearly a month.

During his illness he was continually speaking of eternity and his longing for God's presence, saying in the words of Augustine : " Then shall I truly live, when I shall be quite filled with Thee and Thy love. Now am I a burden to myself, because I am not entirely filled with Thee."

Having made a general confession of his whole life to Father Reynold, he asked for Viaticum, and while awaiting it begged to be laid on the floor upon ashes. When he saw the Sacred Host in the hand of the priest, he made aloud a profession of faith in the Real Presence, and all other tenets of the Roman Church ; then, with loving adoration, received his Lord, and then remained on the ashes while making his Thanksgiving.

As he grew rapidly weaker, he now received Extreme Unction, and after thanking the Abbot and monks of Fossa-Nuova for their charity to him, he began to pray, and a little after midnight, it being the 7th of March, 1274, he departed this life, being then

forty-eight years of age. A vast concourse of people assembled at the funeral of the Saint, and several persons were cured by his intercessions and by his relics. Many universities, princes, and religious Orders begged to have the body of S. Thomas entrusted to their keeping, and at length Pope Urban V. decided that it should be given to the Dominicans, to carry to Paris or to Toulouse. They decided on removing it to the last-named city, where it rests in a rich shrine in the Dominican church there.

The Saint was solemnly canonized in the year 1323, and in 1567 Pope Pius V. decreed that his festival should be kept with the same honor paid to the festivals of the four doctors of the Western Church. One very beautiful story is told of the desire of S. Thomas for God, and God alone. At Naples, while busied with the writing which made his name so eminent, he was seen one day raised from the ground in ecstasy while he prayed, and a voice from the crucifix said to him : " Thomas,

thou hast well written of Me ; what recompense dost thou desire ? ”

The Saint answered : “ No other than Thyself, O Lord.”

The hymn of S. Thomas Aquinas is well-known to all of us, “ Adoro te devoto,” breathing the spirit of faith and love in the Blessed Sacrament ; that “ thirst ” after Jesus was satisfied, indeed, when the Saint entered into the unspeakable glory of heaven, and it was his happiness to see his Lord, no longer veiled under the appearance of bread and wine, but radiant and beautiful as the light of the celestial city, which — because He is there — “ hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it.”

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“ Jesus! whom for the present veiled I see,
What I so thirst for, oh, vouchsafe to me
That I may see Thy countenance unfolding,
And may be blest Thy glory in beholding.”







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